

A Gallery of Memories

How Sugar Land Families are Preserving Their Memories

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Allison Lynch, her daughter Emma and friend
Joshua preview a scrapbook



“A picture can capture a moment. It can generate feelings and stimulate stories about the people and places in it.”

In today's fast-paced society, what do most people do with family photos and momentos? All too often, they are in a box on the top shelf of a guest closet or under a bed collecting dust. It's time to find them, shake them out, and start preserving them! Join the Sugar Land area moms who have found traditional and unique ways to give their mementos a greater sense of value.

Unique Decor

Many Sugar Land residents are always looking for unique ways to decorate their homes. And, some Sugar Land moms are bypassing the new and bringing in the old as a way to honor their family's past. Allison Lynch, mother of two, displays family collections and heirlooms as a part of her home's décor. One of her simplest displays is a place setting of her grandmother's wedding silver arranged with colored marbles in a canning jar that her grandmother used. Lynch also hangs her grandmother's quilts and her own needlework from her childhood on special quilt racks adorning her walls. Including them in her home décor not only helps her create a beautiful environment, but also helps her family remember the woman who meant so much to them.

Sugar Land area mom, Laura Pendley, wanted to preserve an antique fan that belonged to her grandmother. A shadow box, an extra thick framed box that is able to display items that normally would not fit in traditional framing, seemed like a perfect solution. Shadow boxes are not only ideal for showcasing beautiful items, but also provide protection. Pendley covered the back of her box with a coordinating fabric found in her home and mounted the fan to the fabric. Her special keepsake now hangs in her office and is a daily reminder of her grandmother.

Photo Quilts

Traditionally, quilting uses different fabric styles and shapes that are pieced together to make a large blanket. Quilting is no longer limited to just patterns and squares. The newest trend is to make memory quilts using photos and other keepsakes. Instead of cluttering up their closets with by-gone t-shirts or sports jerseys, quilters are making them into memorable keepsakes. Sugar Land mom, Veronica Felix, with the help of her mother, Carolyn Slack, created a large quilt by collecting t-shirts from each graduating eighth grader for their school auction. Sherri Allee won the quilt for her daughter, Caroline, who really wanted it to remember her classmates of eight years. Each graduate took a different path after leaving their school, and Allee felt the quilt was an important way for her daughter to embrace the past. "Each square reminds Caroline of relationships, events, and the personalities of each person," Allee says about the class quilt. Quilts are beautiful treasures on their own, but with the addition of personal items and photos, they become heirlooms.

Charming Memories

Historically, women have collected charms for their bracelets. They would find them at places they went, from people they met,

or even from events they attended. Locketts are also a time-honored heirloom. These days, it is not uncommon to see a Sugar Land mom wearing a conglomeration of both ideas. Luisa Albo, photographer and mother of two, has taken some of her most meaningful photos and made them into charm jewelry. She says she is compelled to "steal the moment before it is lost in time." Her perspective on photography not only stems from her profession, but from the loss of her son, Nico, to cancer. A photo taken of Nico on a swing at the beach shows a child looking at the big vast world. After his passing, the photo has taken on a much greater meaning. With great emotion, Albo explains that, "he is a child, alone, facing an immensely challenging world." The photos she incorporates in the jewelry are her way of honoring his memory.



Allison and her daughter Emma enjoy looking back at family memories

More Than Words

A picture can capture a moment. It can generate feelings and stimulate stories about the people and places in it. For Albo, photography drives her to help families not only mark a milestone, but also capture the magic that can't be recreated. "When you lose a child, you don't have memories to build on. You can only look to the past." She feels that, as a mother, she needs to take responsibility as the historian for her family.

With photos in hand, many Sugar Land area moms are meeting at scrapbook parties and retreats to accomplish the same goal. Chris Jonas, a scrapbook consultant and mother of two, finds that one of the most common excuses from many is that they are just not creative enough. Jonas' advice is, "Always remember that the importance of preserving the keepsakes is to journal. It's sad to think that your own pictures could some day be sitting in a basket at an antique store, lost without a story."

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Get Scrappin'

If your family is counting on you to be the custodian of your family museum, keep in mind that there are many new and creative ways to do it. Whether you place your mementos in a scrapbook, on a quilt, or in a beautiful frame, remember that you are doing your part in preserving your family's past for generations to come. **SLM**

HEIDI GROHS has a degree in Nursing from Marquette University. She served active duty in the Army Nurse Corp. When she's not busy scrapbooking or making a quilt, she enjoys spending time with her husband and three boys.

Let the kids help in preserving the past



One of the simplest forms of keeping your family memories is to make a scrapbook. Here are some easy to follow steps to start a lifetime hobby.

STORE...Dig under your bed, pull out those old shoeboxes and remove those pictures from the old magnetic albums. Purchase archival storage containers for your photos and mementos.

ORGANIZE...Spend a day putting your pictures in chronological order. It will be well worth the effort in the end.

SUPPLIES...For a basic scrapbook all you need is the album, pages, adhesive, scissors, and a pigment pen. Check the packaging of these materials. They need to be acid and lignin free.

STARTING...It is as simple as placing pictures on a page in a manner you think looks great. Add titles, quotes, and journal the event. Dates, facts, and anecdotes are what it is all about! Tell the story.

SUPPORT...Don't become overwhelmed by all of the extra embellishments. Consider visiting your local scrapbook stores to get advice or encouragement. All of the most creative scrapbookers were beginners at one time.

TIME...Make an effort to set aside time to finish your project. Take advantage of weekend retreats that scrapbook stores or consultants are offering. You will be more dedicated with your time and will have all of the goodies at your fingertips.

HAVE FUN...The beauty of all scrapbooks is that they are each unique. Your book is especially made by you. Your family will be able to enjoy your efforts forever.



Allison Lynch holds the pillow she made as a child



Joshua holds his mother's quilt

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