

# The Detroit News

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## HOMESTYLE

# Smart Solutions: Stuck at home? Now's your chance to get your photos organized

**By Jeanine Matlow**

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If you're looking for a way to get through the winter, you can focus on your photo collections and give them pride of place.

Just ask Darla DeMorrow, a certified professional organizer (CPO) and owner of HeartWork Organizing near Philadelphia, who considers photo organizing to be the perfect pandemic project. "People find they're home and have more time than ever," she says. "We are losing so many people we love. It could be a grandparent or an aunt or uncle. If you can't tell their story with photos, their history is lost forever."

Many people are also moving right now. "With situations like accelerated downsizing, they want to get their photos into a smaller footprint," DeMorrow says.

"Whether you have digital or old family photos, dealing with a lifetime of photos can be overwhelming. Think about why you're doing it; you're telling your story for yourself and the next generation. You may not have a grand plan, but it's better than a box in the basement."

She and her team can handle the five stages of photos by gathering, organizing, digitizing, protecting and maintaining them so they're easy to find and share. DeMorrow also offers virtual services and can digitize VHS tapes and film reels and scan photos that are shipped from other states. "People get their originals back and we can turn them into something to be in their life on a daily basis, like a coffee table book or a mug," she says.

Personalized videos are popular. Still photos or old slides can be turned into what people are used to interacting with these days, says DeMorrow. “We’re consuming Netflix and Zoom and YouTube. You can take that photo and make it into something people would enjoy just as much.”

Videos for graduation parties celebrate what she calls the digital natives who grew up with technology. “Things don’t exist if they don’t exist on their phones,” she says. “This makes them feel validated like a grad book would have done for a past generation.”

Photo calendars and tote bags can be fun, says DeMorrow who also loves coffee table books because they tell a short story. She has one that highlights her kids during the pandemic including their chalk drawings on the driveway. Ornaments are among the other options. “They show a snapshot in time and they’re affordable and easy to ship,” she says.

Some photos come into your life all at once. “You might be the sole recipient of generations of photos for the entire family and tasked with sharing them with your siblings and cousins,” says DeMorrow. “It can be daunting if you don’t know where to start. We love this. For us, it’s like a puzzle, a detective show and an escape room.”

“When we give them back, people don’t have to worry about what they’re looking at; they can just enjoy the end result. It’s like sitting down to watch your favorite movie. You don’t go into all the details that went into the making, you just enjoy the story.”

For information and a free video presentation about photo organizing, go to [heartworkorg.com](http://heartworkorg.com).

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