

HONOR ROLL PROFILE

HUNTING FOR A BETTER FUTURE

by HOLLY A. HEYSER, EDITOR

Russ Webb didn't start hunting until he was nearly 40, but once he started, he was all in.

An oral surgeon, he was living in Southern California and his fishing buddies got him into dove hunting, which he loved. His wife Kathi saw him enjoying it and wanted to join him, but there was one problem: They were "guys-only" hunting trips.

No problem: Russ ditched the guys, took Kathi and his young daughter Tiana to Raahauge's in Corona for proper shooting lessons, then started taking the family out on their own hunting trips.

In 2005, Russ's position as president of the California Dental Association started bringing him to Northern California so much that the family ultimately ended up moving there. That's when they started really getting into duck hunting, initially at the refuges, and now at Cortina Land & Cattle Co. near Colusa.

Both of their daughters are married to avid hunters. Tiana got her husband Sean into hunting when they started dating. Leahe is married to Jeff, an avid duck hunter, and their two sons Austin and Gavin began joining the whole family on hunts at an early age.

"They now do the duck calling for us," Russ said. "The highlight of last season was when two honkers came around, our grandson called 'em in and we got 'em both."

Gavin, who turns 10 on the duck opener this year, just got his hunting license and has already killed a turkey. "Now we're getting ready to go to Arizona for the dove opener. Instead of being a bird boy, he's going to be a shooter," Russ said.

Russ's initial interest in dove hunting spawned a dynasty of hunters – the kind of ripple effect that helps ensure a strong future for hunting in California. But he didn't stop there.

As he got more serious about duck hunting, he started looking into California Waterfowl, and he liked what he saw. "I like that the money we donate stays in California and goes to local habitat, local programs and kids' and women's programs," he said.

So he upgraded to Life Member, then bought Kathi a Life Membership for her birthday. Then they upgraded again, and one more time – both are now Life Sponsors. They signed up Gavin and Austin as members at the Colusa dinner this year, and plan to enroll them in the Life Member program soon.

"I feel like something we enjoy so much needs our support," Russ said. "We need to give back to the people who are helping create and maintain hunting in California. It's one of my obligations as a sportsman." That's why Russ and Kathi felt strongly enough to include California Waterfowl in their estate planning.

For more information on how you can help support California Waterfowl programs through a gift or your own estate planning, please visit www.calwaterfowl.org/donate.



Kathi and Russ Webb with their grandsons Gavin, 9, and Austin, 8.

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