

# HOOKEED

## on hunting

*Courtesy of the The National Shooting Sports Foundation*



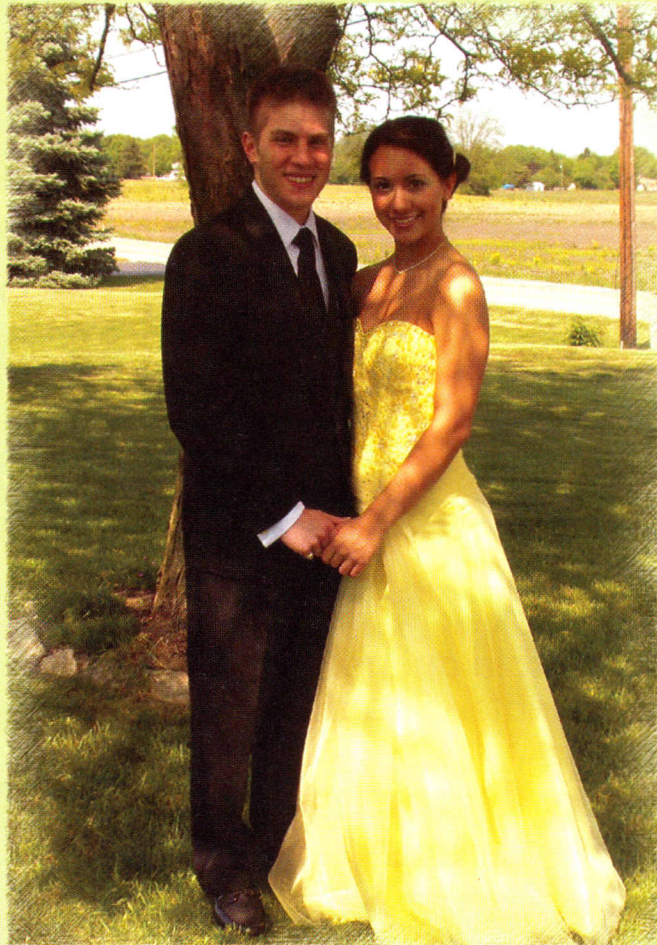
## Apprentice Hunting License Program Takes Families Afield

**E**ven though Mike Corsi grew up with hunters in the family, he didn't take hunting seriously until 13 years ago when his Dad and his two brothers-in-law convinced him to go with them for a weekend of turkey hunting at their camp in Vinton County, Ohio. He took them up on the invitation expecting to do the cooking. Instead, he succeeded in shooting his first turkey. From that moment on, he's been hooked on hunting and decided that he wanted his daughters, Elizabeth and Sarah, to experience with him the family's hunting tradition.

However, Corsi couldn't legally take his girls hunting unless they had taken a hunter education course and were licensed to hunt. It was an unfortunate barrier that was in their way of spending some quality time together. His oldest daughter Elizabeth wanted to hunt with her Dad. She took the time-consuming and stringent hunter education course, studied for the test, but never got the chance to take it because of too many high school activities, in preparation for college, got in the way.

"We had done some scouting together," said Corsi, which is when hunters scope out the area they plan to hunt, "but that's it. She found that part boring and never got the chance to actually try hunting."

Corsi soon learned, however, that Ohio had passed a new law on September 1, 2006, that would make it easier for kids to hunt with their parents. The law created an apprentice hunting

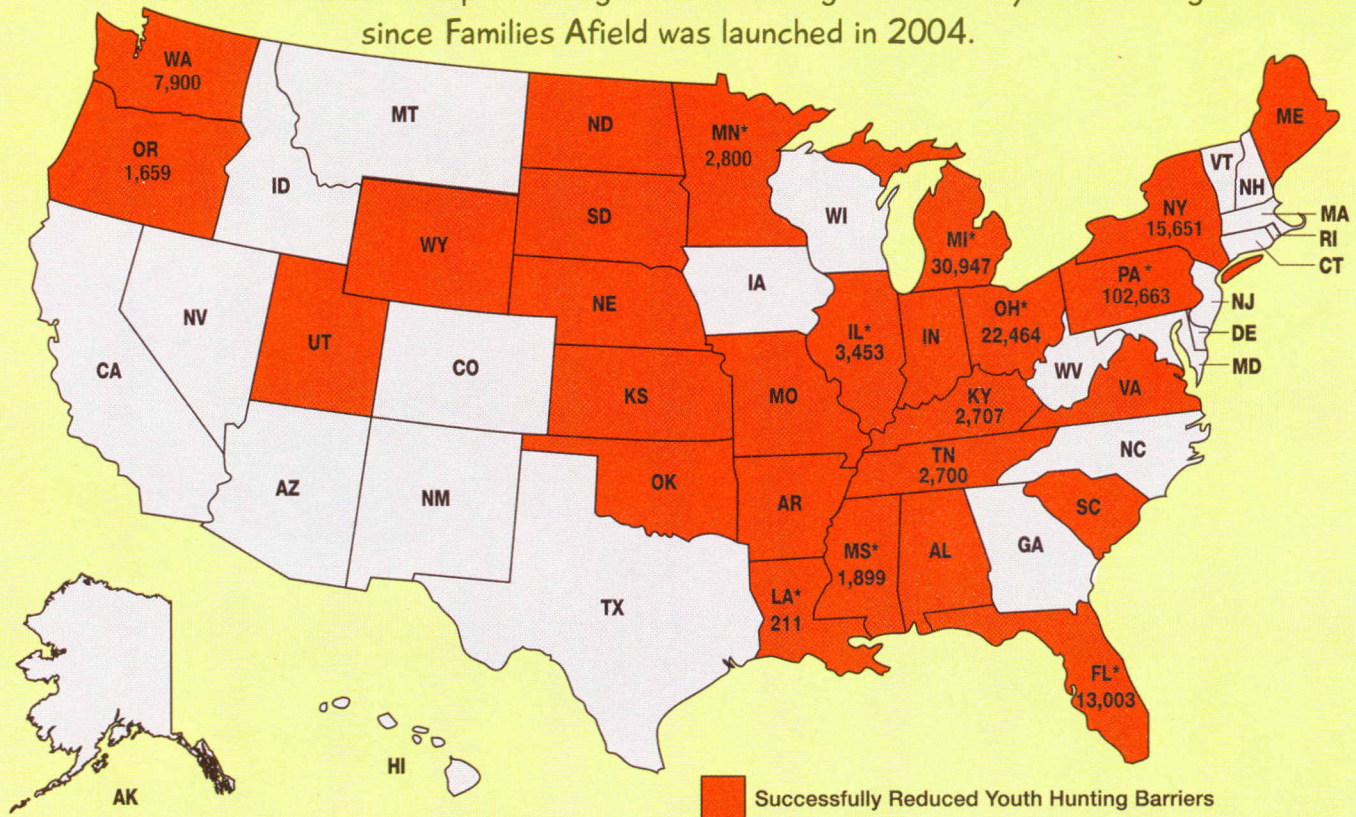


In May 2007, shortly after her first turkey hunt, Sarah Corsi and boyfriend Aaron Lane attended their prom at Westland High School in Gallogway, Ohio. Sarah is now a senior and is planning to attend Columbus State Community College with aspirations of transferring to Ohio State.



Sarah Corsi and her Dad Mike Corsi stand proudly with Sarah's first hunting trophy at their cabin located in Vinton County just south of Laurelville, Ohio, in April 2007. Within two weeks of getting her apprentice hunting license, Sarah, then 16 years old, shot her first turkey with her Dad as her mentor. Since that first experience, Sarah has hunted deer and pheasant with her Dad.

Below: 27 states have passed legislation lowering barriers to youth hunting since Families Afield was launched in 2004.



\* States with 2 years worth of license sales data.

license program, which would allow qualified, licensed, adult hunters to introduce youth to hunting before completing a hunter education course.

"When I found out about the apprentice program I jumped at the chance to sign Sarah up," said Corsi. "Within two weeks, we were out in the field, and we were hunting. It was great."

That first time hunting was awesome for Sarah.

"I thought it would be a good father/daughter experience," said Sarah. "I was always too busy with cheerleading and other school activities. Finding time to hang out with him was hard enough."

That first weekend hunting together became a turning point for Sarah.

"That was the weekend I shot my first turkey," said Sarah, then 16 years old. "It was one of the most amazing experiences I can remember. I didn't even know my heart could beat that fast — the adrenaline rush waiting for the bird to just relax so that I could pull the trigger. It's a feeling only a hunter could know. After that, I was hooked."

In Ohio, new hunters can be mentored for up to three years before being required to get hunter education certification. Since that first time turkey hunting, Sarah has had experience hunting

Sarah, (front row; third from right) is shown here with the Westland High School Cheerleading Team. High school activities keep her busy most of the time, but when she has a free weekend during hunting season, she can't wait to spend it afield.

pheasant and deer.

"I got to experience different types of hunting and spend time with my Dad trying what he really likes to do. Now that I've started, I can't stop."

Sarah is now more than ready to take the hunter education course and the test to get certified.

"Now that I've been hunting with my apprentice license, I'll take the course knowing more than I would have. I'll be able to take the test and pass with flying colors, get my hunting license and be a real hunter."

"The apprentice program is fantastic," said Corsi, "It gives kids the opportunity to go out in the field and see if they like it and they don't have to make up their minds with one experience. They can try it before they buy it."

Corsi is thrilled he had the opportunity to share hunting with Sarah at a young age. He knows she'll be a lifelong hunter now. He expects his older daughter, now 21 and a junior in college, will eventually get her hunting license but regrets that the apprentice program wasn't available at a time when he could have been her mentor, too.


"I missed that chance with Elizabeth," he said.





*Families Afield*<sup>SM</sup>

# A new Generation of Hunters



National  
**SHOOTING SPORTS**  
Foundation<sup>®</sup>  
NSSF • ALWAYS SHOOTING FOR MORE<sup>®</sup>

In some states there are laws that stop parents from taking their young sons and daughters out hunting with them. Their children must first reach a specific age and have taken a hunter education course to get licensed to hunt. This means that families can't share hunting together until these requirements are met. The wait, and possibly even the time that is required to get a hunting license, could cause many young people to lose interest, and that's not a good thing for the future of hunting and all its ties to conservation in America.

Families Afield is helping to break down these barriers. Since 2004, when the Families Afield initiative was launched, 27 states have lowered minimum age restrictions, created apprentice hunting licenses and implemented new laws to welcome youth and other newcomers who would like to try hunting. To date, more than 208,000 new hunters have taken to the field under the guidance of licensed adult mentors.

Experiencing hunting with a mentor provides a safe way to understand and appreciate the hunting tradition. At an early age, apprentice hunters not only become better prepared for hunter education courses, which is required to become fully licensed hunters, but they also come to understand their role as the next generation of good conservationists.

Three national organizations developed the Families Afield initiative: the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf), dedicated to conserving wild turkeys and preserving hunting traditions; the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance (USSA), which works to protect and advance the rights of sportsmen and women; and the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), the trade association that represents the hunting, shooting sports and firearms industry.

More than a century ago, hunters and outdoorsmen warned that population growth and industrial development created serious threats to the future of our wildlife resources. These early environmentalists advocated laws and regulations that would protect many species of wildlife from extinction and preserve millions of acres of habitat to ensure future wildlife abundance. Sportsmen and women helped establish wildlife management in America and today they are the largest contributors to conservation because of the many ways hunting license fees help pay for programs that benefit our natural resources. Apprentice hunting license sales in states that have passed Families Afield legislation are also adding to these contributions in a big way. Because of Families Afield, hunter numbers are increasing and a new generation of hunters is ensuring that the future of conservation remains strong.

You can learn more about conservation and the hunter's role in wildlife management efforts in the Safety & Education section of [www.nssf.org](http://www.nssf.org).

Find out more about Families Afield at [www.familiesafield.org](http://www.familiesafield.org). You can also find out more about youth hunting opportunities in your state at the National Shooting Sports Foundation's portal Web site for new and experienced hunters and shooters, [www.huntandshoot.org](http://www.huntandshoot.org).



**U.S.**  
**SPORTSMEN'S**  
**ALLIANCE**



**NATIONAL**  
**WILD TURKEY FEDERATION**<sup>®</sup>