

# Good Cattle, Even Better People

*An Illinois family believes in the legacy that is the Angus breed.*

*by Megan Silveira, associate editor*

The kids wanted a horse, but it was two bottle calves that helped Kim Decker decide she and her family needed to go back to her agriculture roots.

Her husband, Ed, had grown up on a grain operation, so he was familiar with the benefits of a childhood tied to the ag industry. Children Matt and Lindsey were 5 and 7, respectively, when the first calves came to the farm. Just a year later, Kim knew it was time to dive in headfirst. Ed's oldest son, Nick, had a passion for farming, so the cattle weren't a hard sell for him, either.

A few females led to jackpot shows and then 4-H, and parents watched as the little ones fell in love with the industry. Now known as Decker Angus, the Philo, Ill., operation runs 50 cows. Kim says they had to learn "real quick, real fast." In the middle of every lesson and every challenge was a bright spot: the American Angus Association.

While Kim and Ed were able to make new friends and lean on Association staff, it was the people who connected with their kids who had the loudest influence.

"I've watched them develop so much," she explains, pinpointing the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) as one of biggest game-changers. "I think the contests at junior nationals helped prepare my kids for life experiences."

Kim soon found herself wanting



to get more involved with Angus juniors, expanding her Angus family as she helped coach Illinois Junior Angus Association members in the NJAS team sales competition.

"To watch those kids understand that you can overcome adversity and still be successful," she explains, "those were just some of those moments where I went, 'This is why we do this.' Beyond the showing, the cattle, there's so much more to the Association that they benefit from."

Internships, scholarships and awards came to those kids she coached and even to her own family. Lindsey received the Talon scholarship, and the Angus Foundation scholarship program has helped her pursue some lofty educational goals, including a master's degree and doctorate program.

During the NJAS in Grand Island, Neb., this summer, Kim and Ed heard about the direction Jaelyn Boester, Angus Foundation

executive director, was leading the organization in and says she was inspired. Through the "A Legacy Built" campaign, Kim and Ed donated to the Angus Foundation's unrestricted funds to help further its mission.

"The Angus Foundation does so many positive things for the youth in our breed," Kim says. "I believe in the future of this breed, not only because of the physical attributes these cows and bulls bring to any herd, but because of the people this breed develops."

Across the country, Kim knows there are endless numbers of Angus breeders who love to fill their pastures with black-hided cattle, and it's a sight that only grows her faith in the future of the breed.

"That, to me, shows just how much the Angus Foundation and the Association have done to promote our breed and the qualities we bring to any herd," she says. "Who would have known that George Grant would have such a huge impact on the cattle industry. The legacy is not only good cattle, but even better people."

To be a part of "A Legacy Built," members can donate any level of their choosing through the Angus Foundation website at [www.AngusFoundation.org](http://www.AngusFoundation.org), mail a check to the Angus Foundation or pledge support during events like Cattlemen's Congress or the National Western Stock Show. 