

Our family, a small civilization, struggling as many do in the hectic world to survive. Besides God, our family is the most important thing we cannot fail. All of our children precious, needing us for a short while.

Gymnastics has been the farm fields of our lives, keeping our kids goal oriented, on task, diligent in their studies and work. Humbled with success and failure. Qualities that build character within, most importantly to serve a higher purpose, unquestionably our most precious possession. "Faith" that we pray is passed on to our children's children.

We had exceptional role models in college here at U.W.Oshkosh. Faithful as we have been to Phyllis & Dale Hardt for these many years, we also need to fully recognize the influence Ken Allen has had in our lives, an International Olympic coach and judge. His influence to the gymnastic community spans the globe, everything he did was first rate.

Phyllis and Dale Hardt have been the second parents to all of our children. I feel sorry for people who never find or surround themselves with people who strive for excellence in any field. Excellence is striving to do better, failing, standing up, never giving up. We have seen Phyllis and Dale do this for thirty years, meeting the challenge ahead of them, finding a way to make it happen, and going for it, then pushing to the top. They have been a constant example towards excellence and perseverance. We are the lucky ones who stick by these people, such as Phyllis and Dale, who strive to lead the way. The hard lessons of life are never welcome but necessary to grow. Athletics provides this environment. Phyllis and Dale never give up and have passed these qualities on to those who see. We are forever grateful to them both.

We are blessed with four children in a seven year span. Rehana, Randi Jo, Cody, and Dusti. They had no idea what they were in for growing up. Dodge ball on the floor x mat was the best. Oh the laughter trying to stay clear of dad's fast ball. That taught them to drop and roll real quick. Handstands were soon performed any place that had solid ground. We had to replace just a few things that got broken. There were also challenges of course and with God's help we found the way. The vision God has for their lives only time will tell. Parenting is the most important yet humbling job we will ever love. To serve is our greatest calling.

Working at OGC for the past 15 years has brought us close to many wonderful people and families. We have tried to model so many great people we have met along the way. To have some impact on children in a positive and productive way. We would like to sincerely thank all of those people and families, who day in and day out truly care for their children. We see it every day. Thank you OGC for allowing us to be a part of so many children's lives.

Sincerely,

The Russell Family

Pictures clockwise: Family at Dave's induction into the Hall of Fame at UW-Oshkosh, 2006/
Rehana 4 and Randi 18 months handstands against the wall/ camping 2004/ Cody demonstrating form on pommel/
Dusti on floor at Nationals 2007/ Dusti age 2 at the kids expo/ kids demonstrating their exceptional form and strength/ Middle: Dusti age 3 performing straddle on tree stump/ Randi age 6 doing back flip on tramp.

