(Left to right) Kayla Black with her 10-pointer, Brent Geistweidt from the White Ghost Ranch and Miles Miller and his eight-point buck.

A Lifelong

By Miles Miller

Although you might not know it, cerebral palsy (CP) affects two out of every 1,000 children born in the U.S.A. Forty to fifty percent of these children with CP are born prematurely. I fell into this category. I was born 10 weeks early.

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My parents didn’t know about my condition until I was about 6 months when I was still crawling with tight legs. The doctors told them that I would never be able to walk normally at all. My only hope of walking without a cane or walker was having a surgery called a Spinal Rhizotomy. This would loosen my legs to help me walk better.

Before I knew it, my parents and I flew out to the big city of Los Angeles when I was only 5. It was a long recovery, but it was the best decision my parents could have ever made. That was the first step towards successfully being able to walk.

I have continued fighting cerebral palsy with much family support. One challenge was biking 50 miles in one day to help earn my Eagle Scout Merit Award, the highest award a scout can earn. Some people didn’t believe in me, but my strong will to achieve the goal helped ensure my victory. I biked this in an incredible eight hours.

After achieving 21 merit badges and completing a strenuous Eagle Scout project, I received my Eagle Scout Award. I collected over 500 coats to help people in my community keep warm throughout the chilly winters. It makes me feel good that I helped so many people in my area.

Last year, my disability caught up with me and my walking started to worsen. I decided to have an orthopedic surgery to help. It took three months of physical therapy to gain the full potential that my legs could reach.

In the fall, Ms. Brigid O’Donoghue, president and founder of the United Special Sportsmen Alliance, presented me with a lifelong dream—a chance to shoot a Texas whitetail buck. I practiced every weekend prior to the hunt because we would be heading down to Texas in late December.

On Sunday, Dec. 26, 2004, Brigid O’Donoghue, Kayla Black and I were on the way to the big state of Texas. We were going to be hunting with Mr. Brent Geistweidt at the White Ghost Ranch. Along the way, we would be picking up two more kids—one in Kansas named Cory Smith and the other in Texas named Justin Jackson.

Justin, like me, has cerebral palsy. He was headed to Texas to hunt with Mr. Burl Wigginton on the Wigginton Ranch.

Cory was going to hunt with Mr. Jim Browning at the Browning’s Ranch.

We all had different conditions, but we all shared the same dream: to shoot a big Texas whitetail buck. We were all pumped to start the hunt. It has been a lifelong dream since all of us were younger.

Our hunts were made possible because of the generous sponsors from TDA (Texas Deer Association), U.S.S.A (United Special Sportsmen Alliance) and the kindness of the ranch owners—the Geistweidt family—White Ghost Ranch Mr. Burl Wigginton-Wigginton Ranch and Mr. Jim Browning-Browning Ranch.

I talked to Mr. Geistweidt a few times on the phone, so I had already formed a great bond. I was eager to meet him and his family. We rolled into Doss, Texas around 10:30 p.m. and we all met the Geistweidt family. After we got acquainted, Ms. O’Donoghue, Cory and Justin had to leave for the other ranches in Brady, Texas. They wanted to hunt in the morning, too, and had to get a good night’s sleep.

After introducing myself to the Geistweidt family, Mr. Geistweidt, his boys and I went spotlighting to see the world-class deer he had. Wow! The deer were all over! This was a very new experience because I had never spotlighted deer at night before.

Later, I met our cameraman, Steve Grams. He works for “The Journal of the Texas Trophy Hunters TV Show.” Mr. Grams would be filming my hunt. What

Thanks to the generosity of some great organizations, individuals and ranches, there were a lot of smiling faces from these young hunters.
pressure this added to my experience!

It was pretty late, so I headed for bed, but it was pretty hard to sleep because I was thinking about all the big deer we saw and the hunt in the morning.

The morning came, finally, and we headed out to the blind before light. We were seeing lots of deer, but not the trophy buck we were after. I enjoyed seeing all of the deer, even if I didn’t get to shoot them. Finally, around 8 a.m., Mr. Geistweitl saw movement from the edge of the woods.

My heart started to race. Mr. Geistweitl whispered, “Two bucks are coming. One is a shooter!” Finally, I saw the big eight-pointer coming. I couldn’t believe it. It was torture waiting for him to present a clean shot. I was so excited.

Finally, after 25 minutes, the big buck came close and presented a good shot. Mr. Geistweitl positioned the gun onto the ledge of the window and I made a perfect hit on him. Wow! My mother’s .270 did the job. The buck didn’t go 20 yards. We all were so energized.

We made it up to the big buck; it was huge! To our amazement, the buck had been in a fight earlier and had a massive battle scar on its nose that was very infected. This made it unique, just like me.

Mr. Geistweitl, Mr. Grams and I were so excited! After admiring the big Texas buck, the ranch helpers came to help get the buck back to the lodge for pictures.

Now it was Kayla’s turn. On their first hunt out, they saw many deer, but the deer they had wanted came in too late. While Kayla was hunting with Mr. Geistweitl and Mr. Grams, Brent’s father, Dan, and I went to go sit in a blind to watch the world-class bucks they have seen for many years. There were bucks of all sizes everywhere. Watching the deer was a lot of fun.

When we arrived back at the lodge, Pam, Brent’s wife, had a big supper ready. It was good eating! Mrs. Geistweitl is a great cook. My stay was a dream come true. During our stay, the Geistweitls treated us like their own family and we had so much fun!

The next morning, the buck Kayla wanted came in, but, unfortunately, it got spooked and ran away. That night, the big 10-pointer she wanted came out and she made a perfect shot on him. We were all so happy for her.

Cory killed a big Texas 10-pointer on the Browning’s Ranch. Justin shot a big Texas nine-pointer on the Wiggington Ranch. They told me how nice everyone treated them, also; we all had the time of our lives. We were blessed to have this experience and it helped complete our lifelong dreams.

Thanks so much to the sponsors that made this hunt possible: Texas Deer Association, United Special Sportsmen Alliance, Texas Trophy Hunters, the Geistweitl family, Mr. Jimmy Browning and Mr. Burl Wiggington. You all made our dreams come true. Thanks. We all had the hunt of our dreams!