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Hoskins' Henhouse Suburban chickens saving the rainforest

By Cristina Kim



The Hoskins Kids: (from left) Campbell holding "Oreo", Callan holding "Affy", and Carly holding "Tater" Photo Provided

Nine-year old Campbell will happily differentiate between chicken species and eleven-year old Callan will quickly tell you that the Silkie chickens are much more maternal and will sit on any type of egg. The youngest sibling, six-year old Carly, is much quieter than her brothers. However, while her brothers talk she will have already fed the lettuce scraps to the chickens and collected all the eggs. The children are clearly engaged and excited about nature and the food supply.

Lisa and Dan never imagined having a surplus of eggs or selling that surplus; but the Hoskins' chickens lay approximately ten eggs a day, which is far more than the family can consume. In order to not waste these eggs the family started selling them at lemonade stands and donating them to the St. Perpetua School auction. The Hoskins were both delighted and surprised at the high demand for their fresh, organic, free-range eggs at these events. What could have turned into an economics lesson for the children quickly became an education in activism and community.

While completing an independent assignment on the Amazon Rainforest, Callan learned about deforestation and its devastating environmental consequences. Callan and his siblings found out the reasons behind the deforestation and the number of species being lost; then they found an organization, the Rainforest Action Network, which is working to preserve the forest. The children felt like they had to do something to help but did not quite know how to do it; then Carly remembered how much people loved their eggs. She suggested selling them to fundraise for the rainforest just like they had done for the school earlier that year.

The Hoskins soon began selling their surplus eggs and donating the money to the Rainforest Action Network. Just this summer alone they have raised over \$200 and hope to make \$1500 by the end of the year. The Hoskins have raised this money by trusting in neighbors and consumers to do the right thing and pay for the eggs under the honor system. They always sell out of eggs and have never had anyone steal the money or the eggs.

Lisa Hoskins says, "This whole experience has been so much more rewarding then we thought it would be...it gets us in touch with nature, we do our part for the world and it's fun."

If you are interested in purchasing some local, organic, free-range eggs while donating to the Rainforest Action Network, stop by 75 Orchard and pick up a carton. (The cartons are recycled and/or organic. The eggs are truly delicious.)

Imagine a winding country road, full of trees and sunlight - and on the side of the road a little basket next to a sign that reads "Fresh Eggs." In the basket you find cartons full of colorful eggs and a little tin where people pay for the eggs under the "honor system." Although such a perfect pastoral scene seems impossible in our modern world, one has only to go down Orinda's Orchard Street to find this very basket of eggs and the loving family behind it.

The family in question is the Hoskins family. They started raising chickens about a year ago and have turned their chicken venture into an educational and charitable cause. Lisa and Dan Hoskins first dreamed of owning chickens three years ago but it was their children, Callan, Campbell, and Carly, that really motivated the family.

Neither Lisa nor Dan grew up with chickens but they saw having chickens as a fun and educational experience for their children. "We thought it would be a good way to teach the kids where our food comes from, as well as (teaching) responsibility," said Hoskins. One has only to take a tour of the chicken roost with the three Hoskins children to realize how powerful and exciting owning chickens has been for them.



Photo Provided

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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