

of his wife, Patti. A long talk with his accountant convinced Coreson to form what became Creating Memories and to apply for nonprofit status in order to continue with his dream. The accountant warned Coreson that the process was not easy and to expect to apply more than once.

“The paperwork came back approved and our accountant said that almost never happens. We never hit a snag and that shows how God is guiding this whole thing,” Coreson said. Creating Memories is now spreading all over the state of Oregon and even into the state of Washington.

“We have about 2,000 acres on the John Day River with three cabins and over a mile of river frontage, and we have a pretty big operation out of Richland (Ore.) by the Snake and Powder rivers. We rent a cabin set up for disabled people. We’ve taken out at least 100 people fishing there,” Coreson said.

Creating Memories also has access to another 240 acres along the McKenzie River near Eugene, 2,400 acres near Flora and is setting up operations in La Pine and Wenatchee, Wash.

Coreson said the Wallowa Valley community and businesses are very supportive of his efforts and that local ranchers are particularly important to the nonprofit as they provide some beef for events and a number of Landowner Preference Tags for participants to enjoy the thrill of the hunt. This year three hunters confined to wheelchairs have bagged their quarry.

While Coreson appreciates the community sentiment toward Creating Memories, he doesn’t feel deserving of the award. “In the type of work we do, no one person can stand up and take an award. It took me by surprise completely. I didn’t get suspicious until my son showed up,” he said. Coreson received a standing ovation after his acceptance speech, but he joked it was probably out of relief because it meant the program was over and everyone could go home.

“The kids deserve (the award). They’re the ones who are fighting. A lot of them don’t know anything but pain and hospitals. I have a lot of little kids who tell me they hope they don’t have to experience another surgery,” Coreson said. Parents also get sympathy from Coreson.

“If you have a disabled child in your home, it

can be hell,” he said. “One more doctor’s appointment, one more hospital visit and one more medical bill. That’s why we don’t charge anything; it’s one less worry for them,” Coreson said.

Though Coreson has helped hundreds of children and adults, and the recent renovation of Karen’s Cabin at the scout camp is allowing Creating Memories to host guests, he isn’t resting on his laurels. He currently is working on getting a handicap-accessible path around Marr Pond. “We don’t have a single place where the disabled can fish, and I’m working with Fish and Wildlife on that,” Coreson said.

Coreson has no regrets about starting Creating Memories. “My goal since we’ve moved down here is for Wallowa County to become known as the home of Creating Memories. It may not cure anything, but it helps. I’ve had the most wonderful life any man could ever live. I’ve had a lot of enjoyment in life, and I wouldn’t change a thing,” he said.



Steve Tool/Chieftain

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting ... The restored raven now keeps a silent vigil over the Creating Memories camp and the Driftwood Inn.



Steve Tool/Chieftain

Creating Memories clients Enoch Stalcup and Emily Benson enjoy a pleasant day fishing on Wallowa Lake in August of this year.