

CALIFORNIA

CPA

Cameron Kauffman, CPA  
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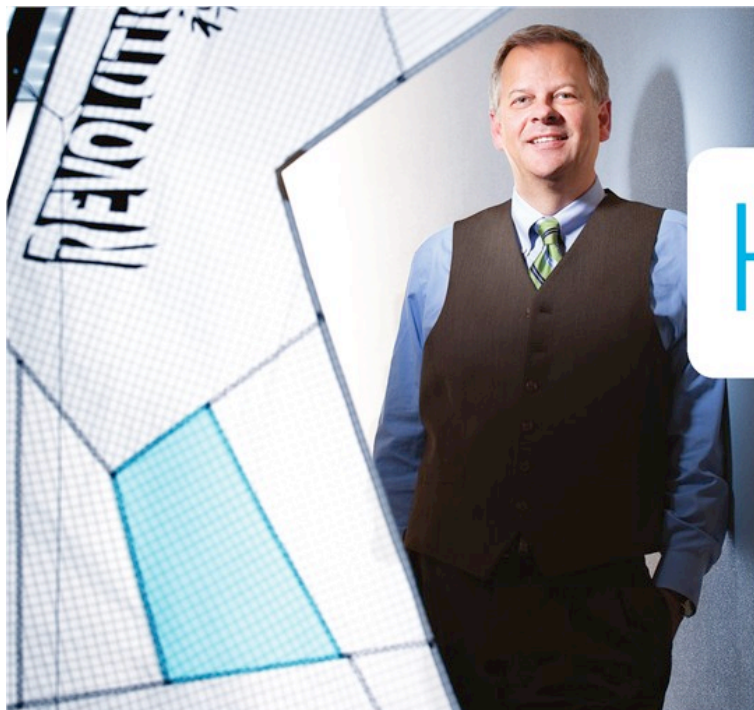
CALIFORNIA SOCIETY OF CPAs  
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2012

# new heights

Avid Kite Flyer  
Provides  
**Lift for Others**

*plus*

Private Co. Reporting Update   Helping Clients Retire   Compensation Guidance



# High Flyer

them that they are on the right track. On a personal level, being a friend and participating in some fun activities has been remarkable.

## Are you promoting the CPA profession with your students?

Being a CPA has opened many doors and created great opportunities for me. I enjoy sharing my enthusiasm about the accounting profession and its many rewards. I have found that many students do not know what a CPA is or what an accountant does. I encourage students to learn more about the profession and coax them to consider accounting or other business professions as a career choice.

## Did you have mentors when you were growing up or in your professional life?

The first person that comes to mind is my mom. She taught me to work hard, treat people respectfully and act with integrity. Before she retired, she was the COO for a large cardiology medical practice in Southern California. Her experience and guidance was invaluable to the reputation and success of the group. She is a stickler for the details and quick when it comes to the numbers. The most important thing I learned from her is to always do my best.

## What's the biggest challenge you face in raising your company to new heights in today's economic climate?

The investment we make in our people to become firm leaders and business developers. Our success and ultimately succession is dependent on this. Our ability to offer high-quality services and attract new clients is about developing and engaging a talented group of professionals who do the work.

## Speaking of heights, what sort of kites do you fly? Do you have any memorable, high-flying moments?

I fly just about anything I can, and have acquired a collection of kites over the years. I have some big single line foil kites, dual line stunt kites, stacks, quad-line Revolutions and power kites that create traction and pull. My most recent memorable high-flying moment happened this summer at the Washington State International Kite Festival. Spencer Watson, a pro on the Revolution kite, gave me some incredible coaching and taught me how to do axels!

## Are the students you work with interested in your hobby?

Most people who get a taste of what kiting is really about love it. The students are no exception. It takes the edge off of the serious stuff in life and allows them to learn and experience something new.

## What's the ultimate, or Big Dance, when it comes to kite flying?

My mantra is "I am a dancer. My kite is my partner. The wind is our music." The Big Dance happens when I push the boundaries for myself. This year I challenged myself to become a multi-kite flyer. I have learned with some coaching and a bit of practice to fly two dual-line kites at the same time, one in each hand. I made my own custom handles and learned to fly with my left hand first, then right hand, then launch and fly them together. For 2012 my goal is to learn to kite buggy—be pulled by a traction (power) kite in a three-wheeler along the beach. 🏄

**Cameron Kauffman, CPA, loves flying kites.** In fact, he has an astounding collection of kites, which he shares—along with his love of the hobby—with the college students he mentors through the Students Rising Above program. We talked to this COO at Eichstaedt & Lervold, LLP to learn more about the program he's been involved in—and learn a bit more about modern-day kite flying.

## How did you decide to get involved in Students Rising Above?

I started attending fund-raising events for Students Rising Above about 10 years ago after being inspired by a profile of one of the students done on a local TV news segment. Last year I became a mentor in the program and now have two students that I encourage and share my experience with. I like working with young people who have talent and the desire to succeed, despite great economic and life challenges.

## What is your approach with the students?

Every student is unique and has a different life story. Part of being a good mentor is listening to the students and learning about the experiences that have shaped their lives. As they gain trust with me, they begin to share and open up. I check in regularly to let them know I am available when they need me and offer any guidance that might be helpful. Having some fun along the way is a priority too!

## How have students taken to your approach and guidance?

Extremely well. People have a fundamental need to be understood. Taking the time to get to know the students and investing in their future shows them that I care. Their responsiveness to my guidance has been positive. They ask questions and grow. It's a meaningful process.

## How do you support their education and personal growth?

I share my own educational path and experience with them. I tell them that success is built on desire, hard work and making many good decisions. I tell them that college is the formal educational foundation, but that the real learning happens once they engage in a career and put their knowledge into practice. One of my goals as a mentor is to inspire the students to continually look for ways to grow personally through reading and networking with other professional people.

## How has your mentoring had the greatest impact?

I think that being someone they can count on who is knowledgeable about the educational process is key. Most of the students are the first in their families to go to college. Being there to answer questions reassures