

2021-2022 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Where the lessons are

Life moves too fast.

My eighth grader just finished the school year and, frankly, I am replaying the 10,000+ times people told me, "Life only moves faster the older you get."

For everyone that ever told me that, and heard my adamant reply that "I live in the moment" and "It won't apply to me" ... I admit my wrong and accept my bowl of crow. Bittersweet.

With that said, I never thought I would be so proud to be a father to Kaden. What he has accomplished is mind-blowing. Not only is he dunking in basketball, but he is doing the same thing in life.

His school year ended with the kiddos going on various field trips and it got me thinking, how much did you love field trips as a kid? I, for one, will tell you that it was something I looked forward to from the moment they were announced at school. They were what kept me focused and doing what needed to be done to get to the prize.

I will never forget the granddaddy of them all. When I attended a small school in Newberg, C.S. Lewis Academy, the light at the end of the middle school tunnel was a weeklong field trip to Washington, D.C. When the day arrived, it was everything I imagined it would be. Seeing the White House in person, the Capitol building, the Lincoln Memorial, Smithsonian museums, the Washington Monument, along with many others — those are things I will never forget.

If you are like me and field trips are the incentive that keep you doing what you don't want to do, but have to do, look no further than the Farwest Show tours on August 23. That is a field trip you do not want to miss!

The OAN will guide you through some gems of Nursery Country. The tours will highlight inventive garden centers as well as innovations in nursery production. I highly encourage you to sign up. Space is limited and spots are filling up, so do it now!

For those that don't know me, I can be summed up as "half kid, half adult" — or at least that's what my family tells me — so my love of field trips will never die.

At our nursery, we have an annual two-day meeting with our leadership team to determine our "guiding compass" as a business. A running initiative that has come out of this process, is a target to take our production staff on at least five tours (field trips) of other nurseries each year.

This is one of the most beneficial things our company does for our people. The benefits of touring other nurseries are limitless. We learn how other companies innovate and overcome the struggles we are currently facing. It offers our staff networking opportunities to connect with other leaders. It also gives us the opportunity to see the safety measures other companies have in place. The experience is incredibly powerful.

An a-ha moment happened when one of our team members shared that it was the first time they saw how a tree was finished, from a liner to a landscape-ready tree. The "why" we do what we do is a powerful tool for people carrying out the day-to-day work on a tree. Knowing you should limb a tree to a certain height or knowing how to make it perfectly straight are all good, but once you know why it is done, it is much more impactful.

This month's call to action: call up a nursery and schedule a tour with them. Inquire with your staff, top to bottom, as to who would be interested in going. I guarantee that you will be so glad you did. If you go in with intention and a focus on improvement, you'll be surprised by the outcomes. ☺



Josh Robinson