

APRIL 2026

The Philanthropy Edition

Overview: The past two weeks have been a whirlwind for Rebecca and me, and I'm sure they have been for you, as well. It seems that Rebecca and I attended more events in this brief period than we have in the past 12 months!

Please allow me to share some reflections on these events and what each one has taught me.

Smart Connection: AgTexas Farm Credit 4-H, FFA Scholarships

"Now that we have the client, how will we impress them?" Those were the words of my friend, client, and business partner, **Bob Tallman**, the Hall of Fame Rodeo Announcer, after we secured the right to represent **AgTexas Farm Credit**, the \$3.7 billion Lubbock-based Ag lender.

We knew the direction and storyline for our TV and radio campaigns featuring Bob. The overarching question remained: **How can we build a more robust connection with the Ag community?**

Bob and I brainstormed and eventually applied a twist to an existing concept – **The Classroom Champion**, which honors a scholar-athlete each week. So, what if we created a similar program that honors **graduating** high school seniors involved with 4-H and FFA?

For non-Ag folks, **4-H** is an Ag program that serves students from ages 8 to 18, so from third grade through high school, with the platform managed by the Texas A&M AgriLife program and each community's County Extension Office.

FFA is the Future Farmers of America program, which is administered at the school level for students ages 8 to 21. Interested students from third grade through college participate.

When we proposed the AgYouth of the Month Scholarship Program to their leadership, the CEO of AgTexas excitedly proclaimed, **"You get who we are. We love this idea!"**



AG TEXAS  **AgYouth**
of the **MONTH**

APRIL 2026

And love it, they do! During April, AgTexas has already awarded **\$68,500** to students and adults involved in 4-H and FFA, and has divided the purse among the Lubbock, Amarillo, and Central Texas areas:

- \$40,000 to graduating high school students - \$1,000 each for 40 students
- \$22,500 to past AgYouth Scholarship recipients who are now in college and are studying Agriculture - \$7,500 each for 3 students
- \$6,000 to Outstanding Adult Ag Leaders - \$1,000 to the 4-H or FFA leader, plus \$1,000 for the recipient's organization, for three recipients

I was honored to attend the banquets in Canyon on April 14, Lubbock on April 16, and Granbury on April 27. Our idea has already generated \$292,500 in scholarships and awards.

Kudos to AgTexas CEO Kayla Robinson, Chief Strategy Officer Kristy Tucker (who enthusiastically embraced the concept from that original meeting), and program coordinator Shelby Goetz for setting a new standard for community engagement in Agriculture.

Lesson learned: We can all find ways to stand out to our customers and prospects by broadening our vision and expanding our thinking.



APRIL 2026

Smart (Dance) Moves: Dancing With the Arlington Stars

Rebecca recently joined the **Downtown Arlington Rotary Club** in honor of her late grandfather, who was a founding member of the club 103 years ago.

On Monday, April 20, we attended the club's largest annual event – **Dancing With the Arlington Stars**, a fundraiser featuring 10 couples each performing a three-minute dance, held at Texas Live! Each of the dancing couples was raising money for a nonprofit.

Like the TV show on ABC, each dance performance is scored. Yet unlike the TV show, **every dance team received a perfect score of 10 – this is an amateur event, after all!**

The highlight of the evening occurred when 40-year-old **Bane Perez** took the floor flanked by a female dancer on each side. Bane has Down Syndrome, so the audience was definitely on his side.

This amazing young man dazzled the audience with his beaming smile, combined with shakes and wiggles.

The surprise came when the judges failed to score him with three 10s... **Instead, they gave him... three 100s!**

A big shoutout to Arlington Rotary Club President **Randy Hendricks** and event co-chairs **Chad and Linda Bates** for hosting this fundraiser.

Lesson learned: Find a strategic way to engage with your core audience, expand your reach beyond your core circle of influence, and tie it to a popular event or movement.



APRIL 2026

Smart Dining for a Cause: Cuisine for Healing

On Wednesday evening, April 22, Rebecca and I were guests of my fellow Fort Worth Rotary member (and past president) **Shawn Snell** and **Stuart Lipton** for the **Cuisine for Healing** event at River Crest Country Club.

This organization focuses on the power of healthy food, serving more than 250,000 delicious organic meals annually.

Meals are delivered weekly at no charge to people combating various diseases. In addition, others who want to eat healthily may buy the meals at a reasonable price.

The courses were prepared and provided by four of Fort Worth's top chefs:

Course 1: Chef Jesse Birdsall from Station 330

Course 2: Chef Anthony Felli from Waters

Course 3: Chef Luciano Salvatore from Calabrese's

Course 4: Chef Paul Williams from River Crest Country Club

Course 5: Will Sancen from Cuisine for Healing

Congratulations to **Cuisine for Healing** CEO **Lori Henson** for creating such a memorable and tasty evening

Lesson learned: What a brilliant way to build an event around something we all experience – dining—and helping us realize this meaningful and effective way to support friends and family who are facing health challenges by feeding them quality food.



Cuisine 
for Healing®

NON-PROFIT

APRIL 2026

Smart Insights on Dementia – Know It Before You Need It

So, there I was again at River Crest Country Club the next day – perhaps I should have spent the night – for the “**Know It Before You Need It**” event for my client, the **James L. West Center for Dementia Care**.

This luncheon started with an emotional welcome from **Andy and Dawn Taft**, the event chairs, who shared their dementia journey as each of their mothers was impacted by dementia. Andy told how “the long goodbye” can be a painful yet meaningful experience for family caregivers.

Andy introduced **Fort Worth Mayor Mattie Parker**, who recounted the path her father has been on as he continues to live with Alzheimer's. She delivered a perfectly timed line by adding that she thought raising a teenage daughter was hard, but being a caregiver for a father with Alzheimer's is tougher. A lot tougher.

The West Center's caregiver education leadership team, **Jaime Cobb Tinsley and Hollie Lowe**, then shared insights on recognizing early signs of dementia as they role-played to help bring the situation home. They detailed ways to make meaningful connections with a dementia-impacted loved one.

Congratulations to my friend **Dr. Cheryl Harding**, President/CEO of The West Center; event chairs Andy and Dawn Taft; Mayor Mattie Parker; and education leaders Jaime Cobb Tinsley and Hollie Lowe for producing such a meaningful event.

Lesson learned: We need to “Know it before we need it” – not just in dementia caregiving, but in a wide variety of critical life issues.



Know It Before You Need It

APRIL 2026

Smart Connection Faith + Football and More

I had the honor of serving two three-year terms on the advisory board of the **TCU Fellowship of Christian Athletes** a few years ago, so we quickly accepted my friend **Randy Moresi's** invitation to attend the **Night of Champions Banquet** at the TCU Sam Baugh Indoor Practice Facility.

In the past 16 years, the program has grown from a core of just FOUR football players to over 550 student-athletes, coaches, and administrators.

I attribute most of this growth to my friend **Chauncey Franks**, who has led the TCU FCA chapter throughout this time and has attracted a core staff who engage young men and women across all sports.

In "The Coach Perspective," we heard from two coaches – **Assistant Baseball Coach Bill Mosiello and Women's Tennis Coach Lee Walker** – who shared how their faith has helped them weather the storms of major intercollegiate competition while also managing and balancing college classes and the personal lives of their student athletes.

Another highlight was "The Student Athlete Perspective" segment that featured **Ansel Din-Mbuh (football), Josey Whitaker (women's track), Quinn Calhoun (women's track), Duncan Chan (men's tennis), and Kade Durnin (baseball)**.

Each student-athlete shared how their FCA teammates and team leaders continue to help them grow spiritually as they attend class and compete in major Division I sports.

I was impressed that a local church – **Fort Worth Bible Church** – stepped up to be the title sponsor of the Night of Champions. What a brilliant way to showcase the church's mission of supporting our university and its youth, showing that they had real skin in the game.

Lesson learned: Life is so much larger than work. Having a faith foundation gives us the strength to face and overcome every adversity.



APRIL 2026

Smart Wishes – on Wings!

Last Friday evening, Rebecca and I attended what has become our favorite event of the year: **Boots and Butterflies Ball** – the annual celebration of **A Wish With Wings**, at the Simmons Pavilion of Dickies Arena.

Rebecca has served for the past 10 years on the board of directors of this organization, which grants wishes to children with life-threatening medical conditions.

Founded in 1982, A Wish With Wings was Texas's first wish-granting agency, and last year, it granted its 2,000th wish. These wishes throughout the years have included:

- Wish #1: A Big Bird backyard playset
- 2,000th Wish: A new puppy for the boy fighting cancer who so desperately wanted to have a dog – he named the puppy Apollo, named after the Greek god of healing
- Walking **inside** the ropes with PGA #1 golfer **Scottie Scheffler** during the **Charles Schwab Challenge's Pro-Am Day**
- **Hundreds** of trips to Walt Disney World
- Trips to the Give Kids the World Village, also based in Orlando, where children with life-threatening medical conditions are the norm, and not the exception

A touching moment occurred when **Claire Smith**, a Wish Kid from 2005, returned from Washington, D.C., to attend the event. Since receiving her Wish, she has graduated from college and law school and is now an attorney who serves nonprofits.

Lesson learned: Sometimes the blessings we give a child in a moment of crisis can turn that life completely around.

