



This is my story of "The Ripple Effect" – by Brett Monson

It was August 2005 when Becky Whitlock and Erin Wegleitner convinced me to take an agriculture class during my sophomore year of high school. After being roped into numerous crazy adventures with the likes of Kevin Danger Nilson, Shonda Holscher, Kelsey Wolter, Delci Christensen, Alyssa Kuecker, Erin Snaza, Molly Esther Rae Skadsen, Nate Skadsen, Antho...ny Gregerson, Kyli Deranleau, Alex, Ethan and Drew Johnson, and many others, FFA blessed me again when I met my time of Rist, Lauren Fosheim, and Sara Berg as we served as state

officers. With Gerri Eide, Jamie Brown, and Brad Bies as our guides, this year was an EXTREMELY pivotal time of life-touching events and meeting the most remarkable selfless friends including a life-time role model still today of Coty Back.

Memories and moments continued through the years thanks to my sister and brother-in-law, Michelle and Brad Blaha - - whom introduced me to the world of Agriculture Future America. This unparalleled organization sharpened my soft skills and introduced me to the vast network of national industry agriculture businesses throughout the year, as well as national government organizations (USDA, World Bank, etc) in Washington DC for National Ag Day thanks to Russ Weathers, Nancy Barcus, Shawna Aakre, Katie Dogs, Zana Manche, TJ Masker, Jillian WoodWich, Molly Hubbard, Jenna Langley, Cary Yates, Shannon Watson, Korbin Davis, and Laura Weisz.

Sara and I had a PERFECT year as the interns for SD FFA by student teaching with Josh Christiansen in Flandreau, having Wyatt DeJong as a National FFA Officer from SD for inspiration, and working with one of the most astounding state officer teams I have ever had the privilege of knowing with Amanda Buus, Paul Dybedahl, Megan DeRouchey, Jamie Flint, Connor Powell, Olivia Siglin, and their fearless leaders, Michelle Nelson and Nora Kohlenberg. We even set up the "Shaddy Christman" Award during State Convention. Maria Buus was all excited.



Agriculture Education took me to China with Shane Gross, Jill Petersen, and Brian Gottlob. I was in England with Greg Nance and Shao Han, as well as Costa Rica at EARTH University with Amy Schapiro, Brianna Loughridge, Markus Hustad, Stine Elissa, and Hanna Sveinsson.



FFA took us to Rwanda, Africa with Tom Griffin, Elizabeth Eastep, Victoria Marsh, Jeff Barnes, Jamie Propson, Ashley Breitnauer, and Trisha Bailey. FFA's Ag Ambassador Program (with Samantha Paschal, Lindsey Calhoun, Jenna Genson, Breanne Brammer, Brandon Allan Smith, Gracie Weinzierl, Jill Gordon, Jenna Byers, Catherine Whitney, Mollie Wilken, Sam Tauchen, Jess Milstein, Tate Bauman, Jordyn Coon, Kylah Reynolds, Mollie Dykes, Haley Cobb, Haley Morgan Schulz and Melissa Keyes) brought me to Puerto Rico with Juan, Bronson, and the rest of the gang. Troy and Stacy Hadrick taught us the importance of sharing our story. Ryan Kelly and Morgan Shaver have become permanent life-friends as we tackle global ag education now!

That miraculous program founded back in the 1920's allowed me to spend a summer as a

Washington Leadership Conference facilitator with National FFA with Whitney Danker, Levy Randolph, Shannon Norris, Zach Wakeman, Jordan Henry, Josh Deines, Katie Mosman, Keisto Lucero, Randa Braune, Elise Stoddard, Casey Zufelt, and Mikaela Serafin. We worked with students that are **CHANGING THIS WORLD** with their Living to Serve Plans.

At WLC we teach leadership. One leadership concept is the ripple effect. FFA has created not ripples...but WAVES in my life. But..what caused it? Where did the first drop start? As I sit here close to Josh Johnson, Mark Roelfsema, and Brady Duxbury on the last day of the 2013 South Dakota Ag Teacher's Conference getting prepped to be an ag teacher at Sturgis-Brown High School this fall, I see that "drop" sitting across the room. He's a champion of change and grows people...however, this champion is found where the lights DON'T shine, and the only selfish ambitions he has is wanting his students to succeed. Yep. It's my high school ag teacher, Fred Zenk. Without you as well as my parents, Bev and Gary Monson, neither knowledge nor wisdom can accomplish much. **THANK YOU!**

