

## Nutrien – Doing “Life Times 3”(Our 2018 Wild West Relay Story)

By: Dave Janzen & Team



In 2004, I sat in my CPS (now Nutrien Ag Solutions) office in Urbandale, IA with a fellow developer named Dave Kleschold, and together we started out on a project that had been assigned to us. I suppose we were technically a “team”, although we really hadn’t accomplished anything at that point in time. We certainly hadn’t shared any of the highs and lows that go along with being a part of a team. Dave and I did have a history though. Since 1980, when we first met while attending Fresno Pacific College (now University), we had been more like brothers than friends, something true to this day. That brotherhood was created by countless experiences we shared together. Case in point, a bicycle trip we took across the United States in 1988. Along the way folks asked us a myriad of questions. “How many tires have you gone through?”, “Where do you sleep at night”, “What do you eat?”, etc. With that said, the question that provoked the most thought on our part was “Are you having fun?”. We’d usually give a pat answer of “yes”, knowing full well that “fun” was not the sole, or even primary, reason we embarked on the adventure.

We eventually concluded that reason was, in fact, to experience “life times 3”. We wanted to experience what happens when people set out on a very difficult task, not fully knowing the obstacles ahead of them or the eventual outcome. We wanted to go on a journey in which the



things we experience in everyday life – joy, pain, happiness, fatigue, hunger, thirst, anger, elation, accomplishment – get multiplied a few times over. To that end, regardless of the multiplier one chooses, “life times 3” is more about the journey itself than the end goal.

This past weekend, 14 Nutrien employees (12 runners + 2 drivers) experienced “life times 3”. With Nutrien’s sponsorship, we entered the Wild West Relay

(<https://www.rltrelays.com/wild-west-relay>) as the “Get Growing Gang”. We ran on behalf of

The Matthews House (<https://thematthewshouse.org/>), a wonderful organization here in the Loveland/Fort Collins area that helps folks get their lives back on track, and in turn break the cycle of poverty. Covering 200 miles, the relay started in Fort Collins and made its way over the northern Colorado mountains, via a collection of paved and dirt roads, to Steamboat Springs. Each of our 12 runners took on 3 legs of the 36-leg route, running a total of 13 to 20 miles each. We were 14 rookies; all we knew of the Wild West Relay was what we saw on their website. And so last Friday morning, and for the next 34+ hours, “life times 3” began for all of us.



You pick the emotion or feeling, and I believe each member of our team would tell you it was multiplied a few times over. It’s nice to feel happy, but finishing your very tough run with teammates cheering you

on at the end is pure joy. It's easy to feel alone, but that feeling is magnified running along a mountain highway at 2:00 a.m., with no one around you and nothing lighting your way but a headlamp and the moon. It's common to feel tired but running up 1,500' in elevation over 5 miles, at 10,000' above sea level, is exhausting. And exhaustion has a way of making a funny



story told in a van absolutely hilarious.

Multiplied as well was a sense of appreciation. Sleep feels so incredible after you have been up for 30+ hours. Cold water is amazing after you have just finished an 8-mile run under the sun. Meals are elevated to

gourmet status when all you have eaten for 2 days are protein bars, trail mix, and GU energy gels. And a hot tub is pure luxury after your legs have been pounded by the pavement and hills.

Of all the things magnified during our journey, the most special were friendships. Team building was certainly a part of our goal in forming the Get Growing Gang. By Sunday however, the word "team" was almost too formal a word to describe the friendships that formed and grew over those 200 miles. While not taking our turns running, we learned so much about each other. I learned that one of us is a single mother (like my mom was) who absolutely loves raising her 4-year old daughter. I learned that one of our members has climbed Denali in Alaska. I listened as 2 of our runners discovered they grew up in 2 small Wyoming towns just a few miles apart from each other. I learned that, like my daughters, one of our team members is a dual American/Canadian citizen. I learned that one of our members went through a painful divorce, and that another is a huge fan of the New York Rangers, the team that delivered one of the most painful memories to my beloved Vancouver Canucks.



I saw a lot too. I saw Norm Gonzalez (van #1 driver) walk a quarter mile back down the route to encourage an injured runner as they finished their final leg. I saw Brock Bernatow (van #2 driver) stand outside in a driving rainstorm alongside a runner waiting to take the "handoff" from the previous runner. Waiting alone is not something a team lets happen. I saw our team pushing through pain and fatigue on hills and thin air. And I saw a bunch of



people laughing like little school kids as 3 mountain goats decided to get in on the road running action in front of our van on the way back to Fort Collins. Friendships grew out of nowhere, and the place we show up to work each day is now all the better because of it. “life times 3” has a great way of doing that.

Finally, as much as going on 5 to 9-mile runs, up and down hills at 8,000’ to 10,000’ is a great



accomplishment, it pales in comparison to the accomplishments of the folks at The Matthews House here in the Loveland/Fort Collins area. Runners can change direction several times during a run – uphill/downhill, north/south, east/west, etc. The folks at The Matthews House change the direction of people’s lives. It was a privilege as Nutrien employees to partner with them this past weekend. And for

the record, the kids at the Matthews House do an awesome job decorating team vans!

**Nutrien Wild West Relay “Get Growing Gang” Team**

Luigi Aversano  
 Brock Bernatow  
 Andy Burlingham  
 Chris Carter  
 Andrew Cornell  
 Cecelia Garcia  
 Norm Gonzalez  
 Diana Grubb  
 Whitney Hatfield  
 David Janzen (Co-Captain & Author)  
 Jeff Johnson (Co-Captain)  
 Sean McManus  
 Amanda Rose  
 Danielle Wheeler

Sr. Financial Accountant, Finance  
 Service Desk Analyst, IT  
 Sr. Marketing Manager, Crop Protection  
 Purchasing Manager, West Region  
 Sr. Service Delivery Manager, IT  
 Procure to Pay Analyst, Project Foundation  
 Vendor Relations Manager, IT  
 Support Services Administrator, HR  
 Sr. Accountant, Nutrien Financial  
 Mergers and Acquisitions Specialist, IT  
 Sr. Advisor, Management Systems SH&E  
 Analyst (Central Cornbelt), Finance  
 Financial Planning Analyst, Finance  
 Accounts Receivable Analyst, Finance