

2023-2024 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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A little bit of mud never hurts

**I have said it many times before,
but I truly didn't see myself
becoming a nurserywoman
when I was younger.**

In fact, if I was being completely honest, I see so much karma coming back and smacking me right across the face lately. When I was young and in school, my dad would regularly come pick me up. I would beg him not to bring his work truck with the "gas boy" in the back. But, more times than not, I would see him drive up in that muddy truck with empty pots and shovels in the back.

I would try to get in as fast as possible before people saw me climbing into this muddy mess, but it would always take a minute for him to move the box of irrigation equipment or other nursery paraphernalia from the passenger seat and smack the cloth seat to remove excess dirt before I could get in.

The truck always smelled like him ... coffee and irrigation pipe glue. I still can smell that smell just thinking of it ... and I love it.

The only thing that was potentially worse than that dirty truck was if he had to go into school to sign me out and he was rushed enough that he didn't change out of his muddy boots. I vividly remember seeing the caked mud flaking off as we walked down the hall towards the exit and wondering how hard could it be to just change shoes?

Well, I now know.

This past month, I was running late to pick up my kids from school after running errands for the nursery. As we were walking out of the school, I looked down and saw the tracks of mud from my boots I had made from going in a few minutes earlier. I was already embarrassed about the mess I was making when my 10-year-old said, "Maybe you should leave other shoes in the car that aren't muddy to change into, Mom — oh, never mind. You brought the truck again."

And my daughter quickly put in her two cents: "Uggghhh, the truck always gets my clothes and backpack all dirty."



Amanda Staehely

Oh my gosh! I have turned into my dad! How and when did this happen? It really is payback for all of those years.

I now am completely appreciative of that dirty truck that I used to ride in. And even more grateful for my dad having a job that allowed him the flexibility to come pick me up in that dirty truck. I can only imagine what he was doing on those days prior to picking us up. He was probably digging a last-minute plant for shipment, or fixing a broken irrigation pipe before he looked and saw it was time to pick us girls up.

So yes, appreciation for this incredible man this Father's Day. I am so grateful he encouraged me and has guided me as I entered this industry. He is a constant positive reinforcer and the perfect role model (like always). Against my will, he taught me that a dirty truck is not the end of the world. And neither is a collapsed shade structure, ice damage, or just bad years.

The good will always outweigh the bad in this industry and perseverance and hard work will help get you through.

I only hope that my kids think I smell as good as pipe glue and coffee.

So, June is to celebrate all of you fathers and father figures. For all of the fathers involved in any capacity within this industry, I hope you are celebrated and honored this Father's Day as much as I plan to celebrate mine. ☺

Amanda Staehely