They say time flies when you are having fun; and as I get older, time flies even faster. August, 2011 seems just like yesterday when I dropped off my youngest child, Taylor, at USD for his freshman year. Athletic his whole life, I had never known that Taylor wanted something as much as his desire to attend USD and row crew. From the beginning, it was a match made in heaven. Little did I know at the time how deeply involved I would become with USD. Like my son except without the books, I too had an education while “attending” USD and we both fell in love with the USD community.

From the day I handed over my son to USD, I got involved. The energy surrounding campus life and the wonderful welcome I received on move in day from a fellow rowing mom got me hooked. I became the unofficial “Team Mom” for men’s crew and became a part of the University’s Parent Association Board. Watching the men’s crew team grow from its humble state four years ago, with little fanfare and support other than a box of granola bars and a bag of apples at regattas, to become one of the most elite and respected crew teams on the West Coast has been a true joy. Watching this team pull itself up from its own bootstraps has been nothing short of amazing! Our “Boys in the Boat” are the hardest working team on the hill.

The Varsity team has gone from virtual irrelevance to being ranked 23rd in the nation in 2014. Last year and for only the second time in the program’s history, the team was invited to compete in the Intercollegiate Rowing Association’s (IRA’s) National Championship Regatta. They say it takes a village and that statement can’t be more true than with this team. The athletes, coaches, alumni, parents and friends of men’s crew at USD have made this come to fruition. It should be noted that in 2014-2015 the men’s crew team had the highest GPA among all men’s sports.

Taylor couldn’t be involved with a better group of friends, mentors and role models to look up to. Last summer one of our USD men’s crew alums gave Taylor an internship for the summer. Taylor not only learnt the ropes of the business but learnt responsibility and life lessons that enhanced his already solid character. I know as he excels in life he will give back and too host a USD oarsman to intern with him one day.

I thought being on the Parent Association Board would give me an excuse to come down to San Diego to see Taylor more, but it has given me so much more. Over these past four years
I’ve had the pleasure to meet some amazing and accomplished people with similar values and beliefs who love USD as much as I do whom are committed to make the USD experience even better. Chairing the Philanthropy Committee and raising funds for the Parent Partnership Fund has been life changing. Not only for those of us on the Board but for the amazing USD students that we have helped graduate. Getting to hear these student’s stories will forever leave tracks on my heart and gratitude to the people who have stepped up to help. The newfound friendships I have made through my involvement at USD are very meaningful and important.

Great things happen at USD that do not happen at other colleges. Grandparents Weekend for example is amazing. To see our students embrace their grandparents, take them to class, dance with them to 50’s music and integrate them into their USD community is awesome. To see my dad cruising around campus and hearing Taylor’s friends yell out to him “Hi Papa” is pretty special. It’s my father’s favorite weekend of the year and I’m sure he will be back next year even though Taylor will have graduated.

Taylor has received a high level education, rowed for a top 25 crew team, met his lovely girlfriend Sandra, and has made lifelong friendships while attending USD. He arrived as an adolescent and he graduates as a young man inspired by his rich experiences that will be treasured for the rest of his life. I could not be more proud of him. He is a better person for attending USD and has never lost touch of where he came from.

If I could leave you with any advice it would be this; get as involved as you can; you will get way more out of it than you could possibly give. These four years of college go by in a heartbeat and you too will make wonderful memories that will forever be cherished.

I’ve always had another child in the pipeline but Taylor is my baby and I don’t have another one coming up. This is it, my last hurrah, the fat lady is about to sing! I couldn’t have asked for a better four years – Life is Good! I’ve benefited so much from being so involved these past few years but watching my “baby” grow and flourish has been the greatest gift of all. I’ve enjoyed every minute at USD, our home away from home, and it’s been bittersweet knowing that it’s coming to an end. But both Taylor and I know we will always be welcomed “Home”! We are Toreros for life.

Go Toreros!

Nadine Terheggen