



Investing in my future

Just got back from the bank, where I deposited a hefty sum of money into our checking account. No, it's not my paycheck for serving as editor of this fine publication. First, that's deposited directly into the account, where it lasts about as long as a politician's campaign promise after an election. And second, no one would use the term hefty to describe that amount.

No, the hefty sum is simply residing temporarily in our account before it's shipped off to Washington University in St. Louis to pay for the first semester of Josh's sophomore year (double majoring in economics and computer science, a minor in mathematics, and certification that he's fluent in Chinese — thanks for asking).

Josh, who happens to be interning at our company this year, was with me at the bank (he had his

own check to deposit) and smirked at my regular joke about paying for his college being an investment in my future.

According to the website babycenter.com, given our parameters (region in which we live, income, public vs. private college) the cost of raising Josh to the age of 18 is \$478,802. His 18th birthday is less than a month away, so I think we've pretty much neared that number.

Raising a child is an act of love, not a long-term financial investment. That said, I'm hoping Josh — and his younger sister — remember fondly all the trips, restaurants, video games and sporting events they attended on our dime (not to mention all the cheering and support for their activities).

The hope (returning to my regular joke) is that our investment will pay dividends when we're ready to retire (and maybe even a little sooner) when Josh is out in the workforce earning his own hefty paycheck. We repeat the joke, tongue firmly planted in cheek, mainly to remind him to not take for granted the gifts — both intellectual and financial — he has been given.

And maybe he'll treat his old man and mom to a cruise.

Investing in his future is like investing in your employees' future. You spend money on training and equipment in hopes they'll work more efficiently, which in turn earns you more revenue. OK, so the return on investment is a bit quicker than raising a child, but the principle is the same.

As parents we invest time, energy (a lot of energy) and money into our children in hopes they'll grow into responsible adults. As business owners you invest time, energy and money into your employees in hopes they'll become better, more productive workers.

And who knows, maybe one of those employees will buy you a cruise one day.

Josh and me shortly before he left for his freshman year.

