



January 2026

This month Exceeding Expectations celebrates our 25th year with our annual Awards and Scholarships party where we honor accomplishments and thank supporters for their role in helping us achieve our goals. It's an opportunity to recognize kids who have had outstanding achievements, both academic and athletic, and parents, volunteers and supporters without whom none of this would be possible.

As most of you know, EE's mission is to get all our kids educated using sports as the vehicle. I have long believed that what makes an athlete successful – setting goals, committing to those goals, building a plan and executing it, seeing failure as an opportunity to learn – is exactly what makes one successful in any walk of life. So we support our kids in athletic programs as they prepare themselves for college and beyond. Thanks to generous support from all of you, our kids continue to have great success in both areas.

Let the pictures of our 2026 Awards and Scholarship party tell the story.



When we first started, no parents were involved. They are now an integral part of EE.



Long-time EE member and now mother of three and master's degree holder Marlene Samano tells her story. "I was where you are now. You can do this!"



EE member and now successful businessman Nik Keller presents four “Keller’s Kids” scholarships to Ayden Briones, Ahris Mayorga, Karla Ortega and Jose Olivares (who couldn’t attend; brother Richard accepts).



Our great friends Molly & Jay Thorpe awarded scholarships to college students Gaby and Estefani Canseco, in memory of Molly's mother Goldie. Estefani was working so Gaby accepted for both of them.



Five of our younger kids braved 8° temperatures to race in the Junior National Cross-Country championships in Indiana. Yoselin, back right, chaperoned the team. Richard and Ayden, back left, competed at the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) championships



Yoselin, who runs for Cal State San Bernardino on a track scholarship, received a plaque naming her Outstanding Volunteer.



We couldn't do it without all our great volunteers, standing here with the "Indiana 5."



The EE Tri-team was recognized for their accomplishments during the year.



Reece Nottingham presents a scholarship to his mentee, Kevin Quinones



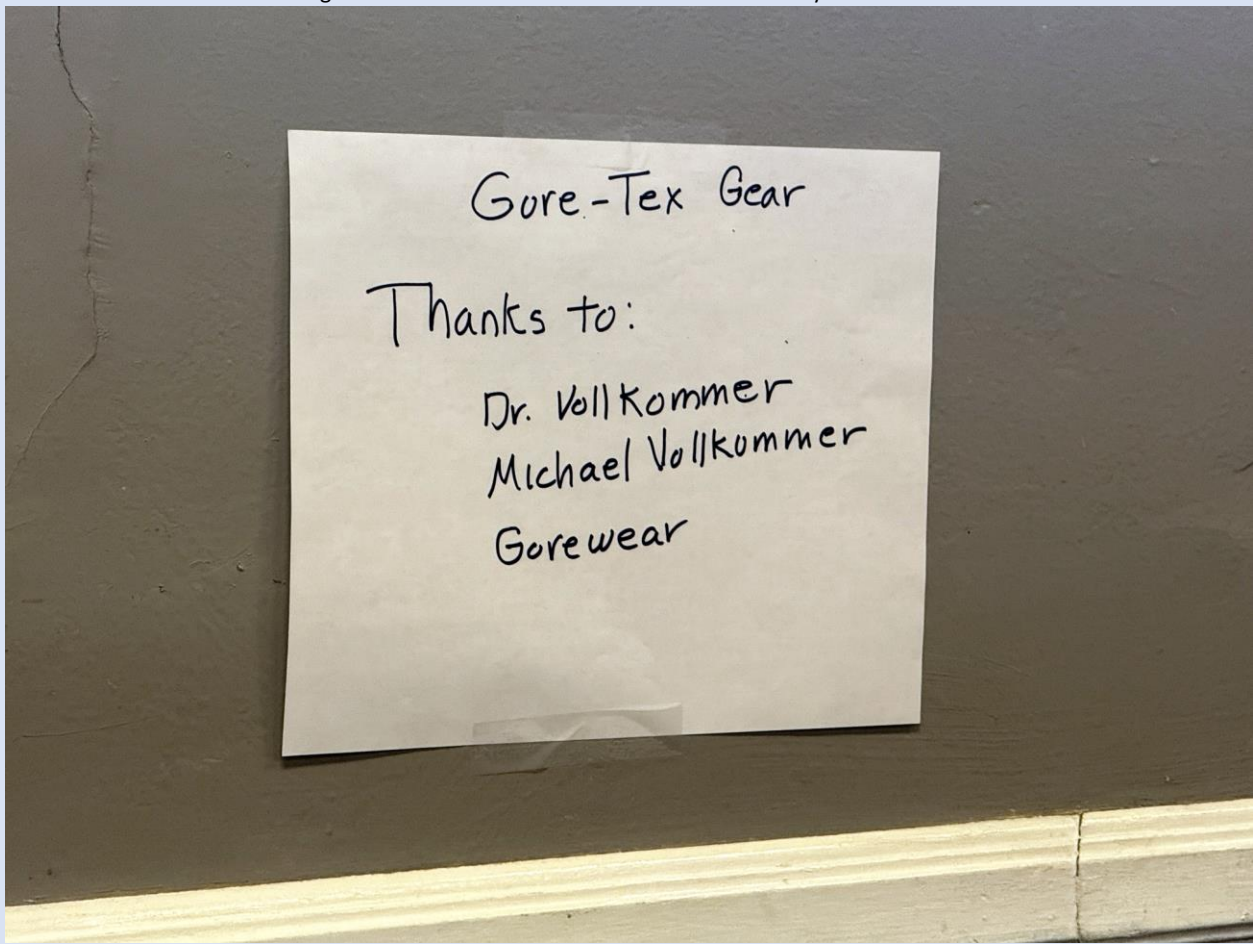
Fernanda Alvarez, who will graduate from San Diego State University in May, made a beautiful video about her college experience to share with the group. Here she is watching it alongside Cherie. You can see it, too, [here](#).



Our good friends and supporters Paul and Brenda Lilly enjoy the festivities.



Former San Bernardino school superintendent Harold Vollkommer brought a truckload of brand-new Gorewear donated by his son Michael.



Running shoes for all the kids, courtesy of major EE supporters Carrie and Tobias Panek of KOZ Events.



It wouldn't be an EE party without a soccer ball.



A splendid time was had by all!