

The Story Behind Floats & Hoes River Day

What started as a float with a few friends became something much bigger.

Many people have asked how this event began and why it means so much to me. This is the story behind Floats & Hoes River Day, and why this day has become about so much more than floating the river.

This Event Has Very Little to Do With the River

It has everything to do with my son.

Two years ago, my life changed forever. My youngest son, Leo, survived severe child abuse as an infant. In a single moment, our lives became consumed by hospitals, doctors, therapy, court hearings, investigations, and trying to put the pieces back together.

As a mother, something changes when you watch your child fight through something no child should ever have to endure. You don't just go back to normal. Your heart changes. Your mind changes. Every decision changes. Every day becomes about protecting your children while carrying a weight that most people never see.

I watched my two older children suffer with the constant worry and the fear. They had no choice but to grow up faster than they should have. They are my whole world and I will forever try to make up for the last few years and try to be more of a present mom than a mom who's in survival mode.

For the Last Two Years

I haven't really been living. I've been surviving.

Every day became about getting through the next appointment, the next hearing, the next bill, the next shift at work, and making sure my three kids knew they were loved and safe.

I poured everything I had into being a mom because that's what my children needed.

Somewhere in the middle of all of that, I disappeared. The girl everyone knew as Sparkles slowly faded away.

At first, I thought I was trying to find the old Sparkles again. But I've realized she isn't coming back.

Maybe this isn't about finding who I used to be. Maybe it's about embracing who I am now someone who still has hard days, still carries scars, but is choosing joy, hope, and to truly live again.

Why I Created This Event

I needed something to look forward to.

I needed a reason to get out, make memories, and feel alive again instead of just existing. I needed one day with my friends. One day to laugh. To float. To breathe. To remember what it felt like to simply enjoy life.

That was it. That was the whole idea.

I never imagined thousands of people would want to come. I never imagined this little idea would grow into a community.

This Event Became More Than a Float

If this event can raise awareness for domestic violence and child abuse, support organizations that help survivors and their families, and remind even one person that they are not alone, then this event has become so much bigger than a day on the river.

My Hope

I hope you laugh until your cheeks hurt. I hope strangers become friends. I hope families make memories. I hope local businesses thrive. I hope people look out for one another. I hope everyone leaves tired, sunburned, smiling, and already planning for next year.

Thank You

Thank you to every single person who believed in this idea.

Whether you're floating, volunteering, sponsoring, buying a shirt, camping, supporting local businesses, or simply cheering us on from afar, you're part of something that has changed my life, too.

Life is too short to spend it only surviving. Sometimes healing comes from sunshine, a river, good friends, a community, and choosing to show up for moments that remind you you're still alive.

I'll always be Sparkles. Just a different kind of Sparkles than I was before.

And I think I'm finally learning to love her, too. 💜