

Laughter, shouts of joy, and amusement filled the air in the backyard of my childhood home as we all played together in the summer heat. It only took one kid to hear the music and shout, "ICE CREAM!" And just like that, every kid was sprinting to the front yard to flag down the ice cream truck. As the ice cream is dripping down our hands and covering our faces, there was nothing but smiles. I never could have imagined that someday I would be sitting behind the wheel of an ice cream truck and experiencing the joy of ice cream from a different perspective.

While working on the ice cream truck, I have been able to go to many different places and events. I was able to be a part of many people's big moments in life like graduations, weddings, birthday parties, employee reward events, and even retirement parties. In all these situations, I can see the joy that I can bring to people of all ages and backgrounds. Just like when I was younger, the kids come running to the truck with excitement and anticipation. Kids are not the only ones that experience joy with ice cream. In retirement communities, I can see how grateful and joyful the people are to hear the music that reminds of their childhood and enjoy an ice cream treat that brings them back to their earlier years.

Because I have experienced the joy that ice cream has given me, it brings me even more joy to bring it to other people. I love ice cream, and I love being able to share something that I love with other people. 2020 has been a difficult year for some, and this year has been different on the ice cream truck to say the least. This year, I have been a part of drive by birthday parties that are safe for quarantine, but there is one party that sticks out to me. When I got to this party with the ice cream truck, I could tell that there were less people than the birthday parties I had been to last year because of the state's orders to social distance. I can sympathize with the little girl who thought that the pandemic would ruin her birthday. After people started to come and enjoy ice cream, I could see the mood of the party, including the birthday girl, shift. The next day, I received an email from the birthday girl's mother thanking me for, in her daughter's words, making this "the best birthday ever." I feel so special that I was able to turn around what may have felt like it was going to be the worst birthday ever to the best.

When so much in the world is divided by generation, race, and social class, the ice cream industry has a way of bringing people together. Serving ice cream brings joy to everyone even when it seems like there isn't any joy left in the world.