



What does Memorial Day Mean to Me?

by Leah Bornstein

Have you ever been to the Cranbury, New Jersey Memorial Day Parade? It's a sight to see and the perfect historic American town to watch the parade with tributes to those who have served and sacrificed for our country. The streets are lined with people dressed in red, white, and blue waving their American flags and catching candy thrown by the Girl Scouts and Daisies, the Mayor, and passengers in various classic convertibles. The people who help our community walk or ride in fire trucks, first aid ambulances, police cars, and vehicles draped with banners for the Cranbury Library, Lion's Club and Women's Club. Veterans dress in their uniforms so we can honor them and the air is filled with the sounds of bag pipes, talented bands and Boy Scout musicians, and the occasional startling rifle shot! The parade ends with a ceremony in Memorial Park where the American Flag stands tall and we gather to solemnly honor all service members. The entire day is monitored by our wonderful Cranbury Police Force and makes me proud to be a Cranbury resident and an American.

Since I've lived in Cranbury my entire life, I've been either catching candy or throwing candy in the parade for 11 years! Although that's exciting, Memorial Day is much more serious and meaningful than that and even the festivities of the day. Memorial Day is about the fallen American Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and women, and Marines who have fought for freedom all around the world. It's about the warriors and protectors who fight for our greatest treasures: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It's about the people who left behind their family and friends and freedom so that the rest of us can have them. It's about those who suffered on the battlefield and bravely confronted evil face to face so that I don't have to. It's about the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers who left the hopes and dreams of their futures so that I can have my own. They gave that all away with the supreme sacrifice of their life. And so on Memorial Day and every day we should never forget where our freedom came from and live a life that honors them. I'm so very grateful and that's what Memorial Day really means to me.