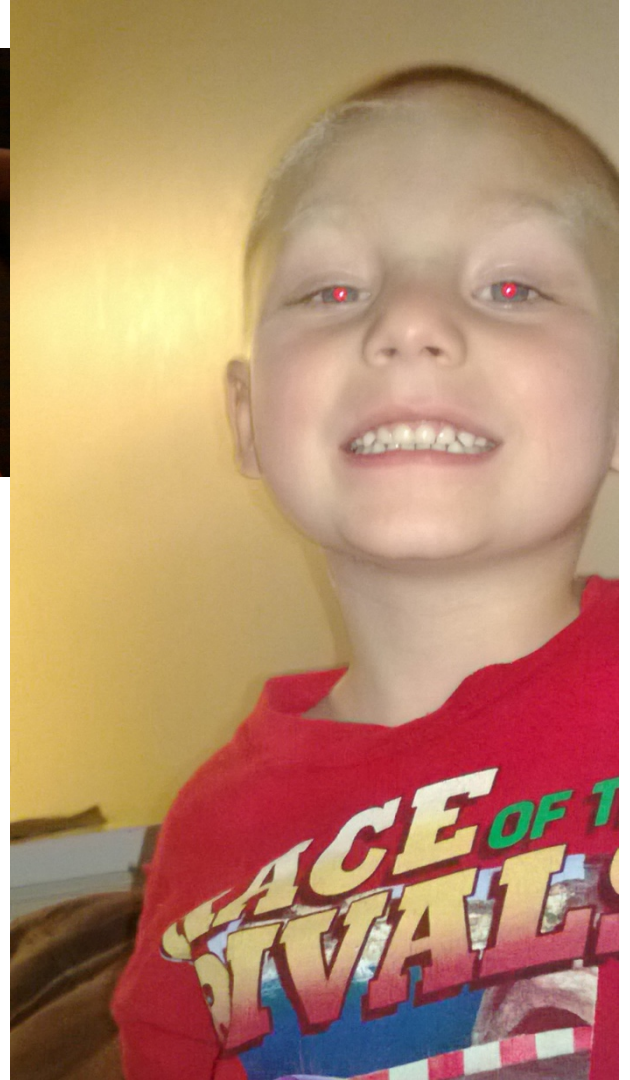


Runner Up

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Fireworks!!

The crowd grew bigger and bigger. The skies grew darker which meant it was time to take him from his safe zone to watch fireworks. Walking to the boat he screamed, pinched, flapped and smiled! I got numerous looks as for he and two of his sibling's also reacted in similar ways. My son who has hearing loss was extremely excited for this was the first time

he would hear the crowds and fireworks, my daughter carried her "magic cloak" and wore her noise cancelling headphones believing no one could see her as she made it to our seats on the boat.

We paired off as mom and son (with autism) dad with daughter (possible autism) and daughter with son with hearing problems. The stress built as the three kids eagerness grew.

10 pm it was time!

Loud bangs start popping in the sky, he screams, she rocks, he starts banging his head. Over and over I try to comfort them. Feeling so alone

in this world and nothing working.

We stayed in our seats on the boat because it was just the six of us and was docked. A friend saw the drama from the kids. He too tries to help he took her to hide in the boats bathroom where she could peak out when needed, not before giving the boys a flashlight to flicker.

This helped! I though I was prepared for the night with everything they needed but what I didn't have was more help. Luckily a friend helped! The fire works continued she was with our friend , our oldest girl enjoyed fireworks with only little disturbance, the boys flickered their lights to ignore the sounds and lights of the fireworks. When they ended I

thought yea! Lets go home. But that started another problem for the traffic was too much for the kids to handle as we waited in the car to go home.

I knew what I had to do, I left oldest and dad in car and took my three out of the car and started to walk home in the dark at 11pm. Not the safest idea however the correct ones for them.

We had the flash lights and there were many lite up streets and was only five or so blacks away. They were safer moving than sitting in car taking off their seatbelts.

We actually made it home before the car did! The fourth of July was finally over. It wasn't great but it also wasn't impossible.

