



Some of my happiest childhood memories began on the shores of Northville Beach.

My summers centered around Sound Shore Road, where my aunts lived right across from each other. One of my favorite memories is waking up in my aunt's house and hearing the Sound before I even opened my eyes. The gentle waves coming through the open window always reminded me I was somewhere special.

Many mornings began with a walk with all the dogs, my mom and my aunts along Northville Beach, searching the sand for bits of frosted glass hidden among the shells and stones. When we left the beach around four, we would lay out our finds on the table. A deep blue piece or a smooth green one always got everyone excited as we gathered to look at them. As a kid, I thought sea glass was the real treasure. Now I see that the true treasure was the tradition itself: hours with my family, sharing stories and making memories on a beach that always felt like home.

My cousins and I spent our days looking both ways before crossing the busy road between our aunts' houses. Some days, we were lucky enough to catch a ride in the John Deere Gator. In between dips in the sound, we made sand "cupcakes" in a silicone tray and decorated them with shells and pebbles, pretending they were real bakery treats.

Evenings brought other traditions I always looked forward to. Each family took turns hosting dinner, and we spread out across the bottom floor, enjoying the end of the day and waiting for the sunset. We ate everything from spaghetti and meatballs to homemade chicken fingers and skillet lasagna. Many of the dishes were made with ingredients from local farm stands. We would always visit the Magic Fountain in Mattituck over the summer at least once or twice. My favorite sundae was Cookie Monster and I didn't care if it left my tongue blue for hours afterward.

On clear nights, we would spread blankets on the lawn and look up at the sky. Without the bright lights of bigger towns, the stars seemed endless. Lying there with my family under a sky full of stars, I felt connected to something bigger—a community and a place where memories were made.

Northville Beach also helped shape my future, although I didn't know it at the time! Every Labor Day, my family hosted the Beach House Olympics which included family competitions like ping pong and softball. When I was five, my parents asked me to sing the National Anthem before the games. I was nervous, but as more family arrived, I decided to go for it. Singing in front of everyone that day was one of the first times I realized how much confidence music could give me.

Now that I've finished my first year at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, I appreciate my beach house summers even more. Being away at college made me realize how lucky I was to have a place that brought my family together every year. Those summers are more than just memories—they helped shape who I am. What once seemed like a normal summer routine now feels truly special. Northville Beach gave me a place to belong, a community that felt like family, and traditions that connected generations. No matter where I go, I know I'll always carry those summers with me. Northville Beach will always be more than just a place—it will always feel like home.