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Louisiana Youth Anglers
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A Bond

I was always around boats and fishermen while growing up in Shreveport, Louisiana. My family owned a boat dealership, Reeves Marine, and fishing became a sport that I was very familiar with. My dad taught me how to throw my first cast, attach my lure to the line, and hold my first fish. He was so good at fishing and I loved learning and watching him do the things he loved. My dad and I always enjoyed fishing together and one day he asked me to compete with him in a fishing tournament. This made me very nervous but I was also excited to get out on the Red River and have some fun with my dad.

We woke up before the sun, ready to start our day bright and early. I remember waking up and being so excited for this big moment, I ran down the stairs and threw on my favorite outfit, bright blue shorts and a white shirt with a monkey on it. Knowing my dad and I we probably stuffed our face with powdered donuts before leaving for the river. As we arrived to river I saw so many boats and was surprised at the lack of girls like me competing. I was intimidated by all the people, scared that I would look like a joke to everyone, but my dad reassured me that this would be a fun time for the both of us. As my dad unloaded the boat at the boat launch I played with all the puppies that were around the arena and admired how many boats were lined up and ready to go for a full day of fishing.

The sun was just starting to come up as we took off for what I consider one of the best memories with my dad. My dad was driving the best boat in the tournament, a Red Skeeter from our families dealership. We lost all of the other boats in the tournament and found our way to my dads favorite spot. It was a tiny break in the river and it was filled with lily pads, but my dad promised me that this was the best place to cast despite all the lily pads. I was growing very frustrated with all the times my bait got stuck on these lily pads. We were not getting much luck until my dad felt a fish testing his lure patiently. Once the fish swallowed the bait my dad pulled up his rod and started reeling in the fish. The bass had just shot up through the water when my dad told me to grab the net. I got the net and caught the fish right when the bait became loose. This was teamwork at its finest and it made me so happy to help him get this fish in the boat. We caught a couple more fish and after a couple hours of fun it was time to go weigh in.

We did not believe, even though we had a bunch of fun, that we would place in the competition because of all the experienced fishermen going against us. As we were walking up to the scale, we saw the other fishermen's bags and most of them were empty. Suddenly my dad and I had some hope and we raced up to the weigh station. I placed one fish into the bucket and my dad placed the other two. We waited and waited for the announcement to come from the head angler and finally he announced the winners. My dad and I won third place and left with 165 dollars and big smiles on our faces. As an 11 year old this amount of money made me very

happy but as I look back at it now and it's the memory that matters the most. I would not trade these moments for anything and I am so glad fishing could bring my dad and I close together.