

# Easley Artist, Emily Ruff, Thrives Following 2017 Car Accident



When a November 30, 2017, car accident resulted in one death and severe injuries for an Easley artist, she found herself focusing on her physical and spiritual recovery.


Emily Ruff, 28, was the front seat passenger in a truck wreck five years ago that left her boyfriend, Taylor Evans, deceased. She experienced a broken neck and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

The Spartanburg native shared openly she was in the truck when it rolled nine times after clipping the bumper of a tractor-trailer as she and her then boyfriend drove to Atlanta for a concert. At the hospital, Ruff learned the extent of her injuries to her neck.

However, the artist, who has a studio under the Old Post 1940 coffee shop on Main Street in Easley, gives credit to Dr. Jake Bostrom who was treating her for vision issues after the accident with diagnosing her with the TBI. She said Dr. Bostrom helped identify the injury and recommended she go to the Shepherd Center in Atlanta. "Dr. Bostrom is truly one of the kindest people," she said.

"If it was not for him, I am not sure what would have happened. Nobody can really predict what will happen with healing."





Ruff, formerly a Clemson student, expressed that her mother – a registered nurse – helped her to get to healthcare professionals with the expertise she needed to heal. Thinking she would never paint again, she moved to Charleston to pursue her art. She went on to meet her husband, Bobby Ruff.

As the years have progressed, Ruff said she is learning that there are so many people around her that have also experienced brain injuries. “An injury to the brain does not always leave obvious physical damage,” the former beauty pageant winner said, “and that has been one of the hardest parts about dealing with the aftermath of a TBI. People who do not have experience with TBI are often unsure of how brain injury works, and that it is different for everyone.”

Ruff shared that the Brain Injury Association of SC connected her with other survivors who have “fought through it and who understand.” In 2019, the Christian artist was asked to share her story at a BIASC event. “Because of the BIA of SC and its dedication to brain injury awareness, I was connected to people who are working to heal just as I am. My family and friends now have a better understanding of brain injury and are always eager to learn more. BIASC has proven to me that I am not alone in this, and sometimes, that is the best thing you can do for someone healing.” For more information on Ruff’s studio, please visit [www.emilygracepaints.com](http://www.emilygracepaints.com).