

A Path to Healing

“It allowed people to truly get on with healing, To experience a great memorial, to have a place where they could remember not the horror, but the love.” -Todd McCarthy

I surely do recall my brief visits to the Oklahoma City Bombing Memorial. However, because of how frequent and seemingly ordinary my rendezvous were, the endeavor did not spark my interest as I would have expected. I always gave my all in acting reverent and respectful in my manners at a memorial for such an atrocious tragedy, but I’m appalled that I did not discover the significance of the plight earlier on.

As Todd McCarthy stated, the Oklahoma City Bombing is no longer viewed as a tragedy overflowing with horror, but a memorial to remember the love, which is so much more powerful than the devastation.

By now, I have likely lost count of the amount of my visits to the bombing memorial, as I have ventured there as a young girl on quite numerous occasions. Unquestionably, I noticed the beauty of the reflective river many a time, I marveled at the museum’s artifacts, and I must say I was very appreciative of the opportunity of being present there and being able to experience the memorial. I’m not certain if it was perhaps my young age that hindered my in-depth comprehension and understanding of what the memorial truly meant to me, to other visitors, to the groundskeepers and workers at the memorial, and especially to the surviving family members of those who were lost on that fateful day.

Sadly, I never understood how to truly appreciate the memorial, until I discovered I wanted to. Hearing the epic stories of the survivors and memorial employees made me realize that I perceived the bombing as a revolutionizing event for Oklahoma. I wanted to know more, to truly understand what the bombing meant for Oklahoma. In my realization, I began to feel something from the event, and realized that it was not the tragedy I’d always assumed it was.

The Oklahoma City Bombing is a travesty that stole the lives of many, but united the citizens of Oklahoma in a matter of hours. In the present day world, there are many ordeals that heavily resemble the Oklahoma City Bombing in the aspect of massive loss of life. We hear stories of catastrophic events happening almost daily: the mass school shootings, cars driving into parade watchers, bombs at races, and the wars that don’t seem to end. Yet somehow, in the midst of tragedy, there’s a ray of hope, a glimpse of compassion as concerned citizens reach out to help those who are hurting.

After researching the Oklahoma City Bombing’s backstory, it oddly brought me a form of hope and enlightenment, almost as if a new door I never knew was there opened to me abruptly. The message that moved me was in the very moment of chaos, fear, and death, harmony, unity, and teamwork emerged triumphantly. The amount of hope that this message restored in me is immeasurable and indescribable. I do believe that in the midst of all the uncountable crises in this world, hope and good intentions will eventually come into view.

The Oklahoma City Bombing is such a significant historical landmark in Oklahoma history because it signified the coming together of citizens all over, amidst a sea of suffering and grief. It showed that the positive overpowered the negative by multitudes, and that miracles do happen.

2nd Place

5th-6th Grade

23rd Annual Student Essay Contest | Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum

After a long period of reflecting, I've finally distinguished my meaning and my connection with the Oklahoma City Bombing Memorial and how it paved the path to healing by uniting the society of Oklahoma. I now know that my misconceptions were far from the true meaning. It isn't merely a place where individuals can visit, it is a place of hope, remembrance, and recognition. It is a place that cannot ever be emotionally minimized. It is a place that brings education, peace, and unity in reminiscing on this fateful event that forever changed Oklahoma.