

Honorable Mention

5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Grade

23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Student Essay Contest | Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum

### Oklahoma Hope

Have you seen, heard, or been in a tragic accident? I haven't, but I know people who have. There have been many tragedies in Oklahoma but the biggest one was the Oklahoma City Bombing.

The Oklahoma City Bombing was horrible. There were over 600 injured and 168 dead including 20 children. The survivors are living to tell the tale of how Oklahomans and the country came to the rescue.

People all over Oklahoma were coming to help. People were bringing pizza, water, shoes, clothes, blankets, etc.. to the people who needed help. Kids all over the world were sending thank you cards to the first responders and get better cards to the people who were injured. "The children were the ones people wanted to protect the most, but they seemed to be doing the most healing."-Rita Aragon. This quote stood out to me because I think kind words, donations of food and supplies and loving pictures drawn by strangers for survivors and first responders at ground zero help unify the community after a tragedy.

According to official reports, a Ryder truck filled with 6,200 pounds of fertilizer fashioned into a bomb was placed outside the Murrah Building and detonated at 9:02 AM. This domestic terrorist attack was supposedly planned and executed by only Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols. McVeigh drove the bomb to the scene, while Nichols was in Kansas. Shortly after the explosion, McVeigh was stopped in I-35 for driving without a license plate and was arrested for unlawfully carrying a weapon. McVeigh was convicted in 1997 and executed in 2001 and Nichols serves a life sentence.

Even though this misguided and senseless act of violence changed hundreds of families lives forever, the community quickly came together to support the Survivors. Today, a memorial and marathon remain to teach and remind us all of those that lost their lives and those willing to help in any way necessary during the dark days post bombing. As Kari Watkins stated, "The world holds more good than bad." This was very apparent with the outpouring of resolve, assistance, and hope following the event. The relief efforts after the disaster occurred and the continuous community support over the nearly thirty years since 168 people needlessly lost their lives are a testament to the Oklahoma Standard.