

2nd Place

7th-8th Grade

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

Hope From Ashes

“You and I may not know each other, but in a time of need we help each other; it’s the Oklahoma standard.” That was spoken in the video made to remember the Murrah Building bombing. The Murrah Building bombing was a terrible tragedy, but it taught us that in a time of great pain the people of Oklahoma will come together and help one another. We continue to see this today with Oklahomans helping Oklahomans when times get hard.

Oklahoma has a special phenomenon called the Oklahoma Standard. The Oklahoma Standard is the idea that people have kindness in their hearts and wish to show goodwill to others. Though it was coined in the aftermath of the tragedy, the Oklahoma Standard is still very important today. It helps us to remember that we must stay united as one force acting to benefit one another’s lives. I am grateful for this act and I hope to see people in day to day life following the Oklahoma Standard, and I pray that one day the rest of the world will be able to follow this standard as well.

We can still see the Oklahoma Standard in full force to this day. A recent example is last year when a tornado hit the town of Shawnee. Many homes and businesses were destroyed or severely damaged, but one institute I remember suffering severely was Oklahoma Baptist University. My father is a professor at OBU, so naturally this was upsetting for him. Despite all the damage and loss, people still persevered and helped to rebuild the campus so that the students and faculty could have their campus back. This was a perfect example of the Oklahoma Standard; people with no obligation were taking precious time out of their day to help someone in need.

Many lives were lost in the bombing, and many other lives deeply affected, but that doesn’t mean something wasn’t gained. On that day April 19, 1995, we learned that through all of the hardships we face we will still persevere and there will be a tomorrow. We also learned that to reach this day where things can be better we must help one another. This lesson was learned not just in Oklahoma but the entirety of the United States. We can see the Oklahoma Standard in all sorts of places today. Six years after the bombing, America faced another tragic terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. It was the biggest attack on The United States in it’s history, but people remembered the idea of the Oklahoma standard and didn’t let the terrorist take their spirit. The bombing is relevant for teaching us to persevere and help one other.

I think it is very important for us to remember to help each other. It is also important to remember that life continues through all the hardships we endure. Though the tragedy was many years ago, it is still relevant and stays in the hearts and minds of Oklahomans for the hope it gave us after the initial pain. We lost much that day but the hope and endurance we gained can never be taken away.