



# Seeing the best during the worst

The tornado of 1999 impacted many in Montgomery, with the F-4 tornado leaving devastation in its path. Even in the City's tragedy emerged heroic stories of rescue and countless people who offered support, self sacrifice and selfless actions in the moments, hours, days and months following the disaster.

As the community approaches the 10th anniversary of the event, most remembered in the minds of the many individuals and families impacted, are the people; people who gave with their hearts and their hands to make a difference for those neighbors, friends and even strangers in need.

Cartoonist Jim Borgman's drawing of a number of hands clasped together and holding up each other with the statement "we're all in this together" summarizes the feeling of community that sprung up among neighbors, pulled support from other communities, tied the faith-

based groups together to reach out to meet needs, inspired creative solutions from City staff and inspired people to work with such purpose.

Then Mayor Dick Tuten recalls, "It was dark when the phone rang. The power was off. My neighbor said that a tornado had just struck their house and damaged their roof and that there was other damage in the neighborhood."

In a very short time many service crews from 35 municipalities sent their crews to help.

Five days after the tornado a

large FEMA group arrived to review the damage and the damage assessments made by the City staff and the County.

City Council had an emergency meeting and authorized funding to help in the recovery.

The City staff, in partnership with St. Barnabas Church, established a volunteer registration site to cover the City of Montgomery and Symmes and Sycamore Townships.

Jill Cole, one resident who lost her entire home, reflects on that year and believes that it was both the best and the worst year

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— Jill Cole  
Montgomery Resident

in one. She said, "People move to neighborhoods for lots of reasons. My guess is that many of us moved to Montgomery Woods for the trees. But in a matter of moments what defined us was taken away. But we went to bed on the night of April 8th as neighbors, and in the aftermath of the tornado we became a community."

These comments, although from different perspectives, focus on the impact and a sense of togetherness that came from the timely, collective response that came from so many in order to ease the suffering and restore a sense of normalcy to the daily lives of those that had lost something or someone.

On April 5, the community will gather for reflection, commemoration and rejuvenation for the occasion of the 10-year landmark of this significant date in history.

Watch for details in the March *Bulletin* and on the City web site.