

# Tornado anniversary event planned

**ROCHELLE** — It's been nearly a year since the Rochelle area experienced the tornado and its devastation. To signify the achievements of the families who have endured the lasting effects as well as recognizing the support given by the community, a commemoration is scheduled for Saturday, April 9 at Rochelle Township High School.

The event, from noon to 3 p.m., includes a short program with a welcome message and prayer along with food, music and children's activities.

"Visitors to the event will be treated to lunch, music and entertainment for kids including a bounce house, face painting and the park district's imagination station," said Jenny Thompson, communications chairperson of the Ogle County Long Term Recovery Committee (LTRC).

Through a survey conducted by the LTRC last year given to the affected families, the respondents answered they would like some sort of an event to commemorate the anniversary.

"Each of these families shares a unique bond having gone through an experience that the rest of us can only imagine," Thompson said. "We wanted to give them the chance to come together to catch up, share their progress and possibly help each other move forward."

Along with the families that were directly affected, the community is welcome to attend the event as a way to recognize their support given to their neighbors in more ways than one.

"(The event) will be to commemorate the events of April 9, and to celebrate the achievements of the families who have endured so much in the past year. It is also

to recognize the tremendous outpouring of emotional, financial, and volunteer support provided by members of our community, our region, state and country," said Kim Montgomery, executive director, Rochelle Area Community Foundation.

Montgomery acknowledged that RACF is proud to have played a role in the recovery process.

"We appreciate the steadfast efforts of those community volunteers who have dedicated the gift of their time and talent to ensure the most fair and unbiased process of distributing assistance to those who were and continue to be directly affected by the storm," Montgomery said. "Each of us in this community has a unique perspective of the events of April 9 and the days, weeks, months that followed. From my perspective, I see how a community came together to solve complex problems for the benefit of friends, family, neighbors and those we had not yet known."

Thompson said many of the families the committee has spoken with have mentioned an event would be an opportunity to give thanks to the local people that assisted all that were affected.

"We believe it is important to recognize the way our area came together after the tornado," Thompson said.

Montgomery said that although there have been many accomplishments in the past year, there is still work to be done.

Adding, "We look forward to the opportunity this event provides for the community to join with the families for a time of fun, fellowship and celebration for all that has been accomplished so far. We are HUB STRONG!"

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**Jenny Thompson**