

# A Stronger Boston

- Drew Faria

I remember April 15th, 2013, much differently than most people do. My family and I left for the week of vacation to San Francisco, where some of our relatives live. On that bright and relaxing morning, we decided to visit the California Academy of Sciences. We strolled through rooms full to the brim with earthquake patterns to butterflies. I was caught up in a display on the relationship between the genes of humans and insects, when my brother ran over to me with wide eyes. His hand clenched his phone, which would not stop buzzing. He told me of an explosion at the marathon finish line in Boston. A friend of his kept him updated, for her mother was a runner in the race. My brother would not stop his worrying reports. His phone vibrated incessantly. I began to feel a deep knot tighten in my stomach; something was definitely happening back home. The rest of my family had left the exhibit, which my brother could no longer pay attention to. The two of us caught up to them on a bridge that spanned a large tank of fish. My brother instantly burst into an explanation of what happened in Boston. Mom reached for her phone to search for news updates. Sure enough, a bomb exploded at the end of the marathon, but details were scarce. Even though we were on the opposite side of the country, we could sympathize with our fellow Bostonians. It was at this time I looked over the edge of the bridge into the tank below. Thoughts flowed through my head faster than the water. I saw several sharks and sting rays in the tank. With them, several smaller and defenseless fish swam calmly around them. My mind suddenly stopped all of the unending thoughts, except for one: why can't we be like the fish? Think about it, the sharks and rays had the teeth and barbed tails to easily kill all of the fish in the tank, but they didn't. So, why do humans with weapons have to use violence on each other? I reflected on this idea for a while. We do not hold responsibility for the marathon bombings. The terror and suffering that has been endured ever since is inexcusable. But in its wake, we should consider how our actions affect others, both short and long term. Maybe we yelled at someone in anger, and now they carry the same animosity we did. Only negative consequences will result. If Massachusetts truly identifies itself as "Boston Strong," then our goal as a community is more than showing resilience since April 15th. We must focus on treating everyone with the respect and kindness that everyone deserves. The news reminds us of this all of the time. Too many shootings and attacks occur for us not to notice a pattern: most of the perpetrators faced persecution themselves. If we overcome the negative impulses we associate with different people, that is the way to truly make ourselves "Boston Strong."