

THE GRRF HELPS A TORNADO VICTIM

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The Oct. 20 tornadoes reminded Shelby what was really important in life: her family. (Pictured left to right: Nelson, 2-year-old Hudson and Shelby)

Shelby Hooks, a corporate recruiter for the design and sourcing teams, could hear the tornado racing closer to her Richardson, Texas, home on the evening of Sunday, Oct. 20. As the sirens began to wail, Shelby grabbed her sleeping 2-year-old son and ran to the bathroom, along with her husband, Nelson, their two dogs, and Shelby's father and stepmother who were visiting that day.

"It's stuff you only hear about in a movie," Shelby said. "The whole house shook and then it was dead silent. It sounds like a train and then silence. You could feel the plumbing shake."

After about 30 seconds of terror, the tornado passed, leaving behind a trail of destruction. The chimney of Shelby's home had collapsed, and the ceiling was caving in. On top of that, glass was scattered throughout the house after one of the windows broke.



The chimney of Shelby's house collapsed as the tornado ripped through the street.

there.”

Shelby and Nelson had been renting their house in Richardson, and after the tornadoes, they'd stayed at Nelson's mother's house. They knew finding the money for a security deposit on a new house would be tough: Just last year, Nelson was laid off from his job, and the family had to use their savings to make ends meet. Fortunately for the family, JCPenney has a program in place to help associates after events like a natural disaster — the [Golden Rule Relief Fund \(GRRF\)](#).

Outside, the family found fallen trees and branches strewn across the neighborhood. Nelson's car was in bad shape too, with enormous dents and broken windows. Shelby counts them lucky, though, because toys and patio furniture were the only belongings they lost — especially since their neighbor's house was completely destroyed after the roof was torn off.

“We didn't know where we were going to live,” Shelby said. “We just threw our stuff in bags and left.”

A Bright Spot

Nearly a dozen tornadoes ripped through the Dallas-Fort Worth area on Oct. 20. Five days after the storms on Friday, Oct. 25, city officials notified Shelby and her family that they had only four days to get all of their stuff out of the house.

“It was super stressful,” Shelby said. “We were rushed to hurry up and just get out of the house since it wasn't safe to be

“I’d heard of the Golden Rule Relief Fund but didn’t think of it right away,” Shelby said. “You never think you’re going to be in a situation to need it.”

After filling out some basic paperwork and providing documentation, Shelby received the funds about a week later — and the family used the money for moving costs and a security deposit on the house they’re now renting in Plano.

The Ins and Outs of the GRRF

Associates can apply for a grant from the GRRF if their emergency falls into one of six qualifying events: disaster (declared or natural), flood, fire, crime, medical condition or a death in the family. While some paperwork and documentation are required, most associates like Shelby say it’s a pretty easy process. You can find more details on how the GRRF works [here](#).



Fences were destroyed after the Oct. 20 tornadoes.

There’s also another way to get involved and help team members like

Shelby: Associates can make a donation to the GRRF by visiting Associate Kiosk > My Money > My Giving > Payroll Giving, or by donating at the register in support of the GRRF. Take it from Shelby: Your generosity will provide a much-needed morale boost for your fellow associates as they’re going through a tough time.

“It helped relieve a lot of stress and worry about the future, so there’s really nothing else to say except ‘thank you,’” Shelby said. “Anyone who contributes — you’re definitely making a difference.”