

Remembering September 11

25TH ANNIVERSARY | 2001–2026



Tribute in Light, New York City. Image: 9/11 Memorial & Museum.

On September 11, 2026, Bellalago & Isles of Bellalago joins the nation in marking 25 years since the attacks of September 11, 2001. We honor those whose lives were taken, those who answered the call to help, and the families who carry their absence. Through history and the memories shared by our neighbors, we preserve the human stories behind a day that changed so many lives.

THE EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 11

The Morning That Changed America

On Tuesday, September 11, 2001, ordinary journeys to work and flights across the country became part of a coordinated terrorist attack. Nineteen hijackers took control of four commercial airliners. Two struck the World Trade Center, one struck the Pentagon, and the fourth crashed in Pennsylvania after passengers and crew resisted. The attacks killed 2,977 victims. That number represents individual lives, each with relationships, responsibilities and plans that would never be fulfilled.

The first impact came at 8:46 a.m. Eastern time, when American Airlines Flight 11 struck the North Tower. At 9:03 a.m., United Airlines Flight 175 hit the South Tower. Seventeen minutes separated the two impacts. For people watching the developing news, the second collision made the coordinated nature of the disaster unmistakable.

At 9:37 a.m., American Airlines Flight 77 struck the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. The South Tower collapsed at 9:59 a.m. At 10:03 a.m., United Airlines Flight 93 crashed near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, after people aboard fought back against the hijackers. The North Tower collapsed at 10:28 a.m. All these times are Eastern, the same time zone used here in Central Florida.

A timeline gives us a way to understand the order of events. It cannot fully describe what those minutes meant to someone in a stairwell, a family waiting for a telephone call, or a responder approaching the scene. Alongside the historical record, those experiences deserve a place in remembrance. The personal accounts shared in this newsletter help make that connection.

On this twenty-fifth anniversary, consider pausing at one of these times and thinking about a single person whose life was changed. Perhaps it is someone named here, someone in your own family, or a neighbor whose experience you have only recently learned. Remembering the sequence matters. Remembering the people gives those times their lasting significance for all of us.

[9/11 Memorial timeline](#)

[9/11 Memorial educational resources](#)

SECURITY THEN AND NOW

How September 11 Changed Air Travel

For travelers who remember flying before September 11, the changes can feel especially personal. Meeting a relative at the gate or accompanying someone almost to the aircraft was once a familiar part of an airport visit. Security screening already existed: metal detectors and carry-on X-rays were in use, and airlines relied largely on private screening contractors. The pre-9/11 airport was not a place without safeguards, but its safeguards proved inadequate against the attacks that unfolded that morning.

The use of passenger aircraft as weapons forced a fundamental reassessment. In November 2001, Congress created the Transportation Security Administration. Screening responsibilities changed, checked-baggage screening expanded, and access to secure airport areas became more restricted. Reinforced cockpit doors and tighter cockpit-access procedures addressed the danger of someone gaining control of an aircraft after boarding.

Changes continued over the years. Later attempted attacks contributed to additional rules and screening technologies, including measures involving shoes, liquids and body scanners. It is therefore inaccurate to treat every familiar airport procedure as a rule introduced immediately after 9/11. The security system developed in stages, responding to different threats and incorporating new equipment and methods.

Today, passenger screening, identity verification, baggage checks and flight-deck protection form different parts of that system. Exact procedures can change, and airports or screening lanes may operate differently. A historical article should not be used as a checklist for a future journey; travelers should consult current airline and TSA guidance when preparing to fly.

For our community, this history helps explain why something as ordinary as a family vacation can carry reminders of September 11. A checkpoint is also a place where people bring different memories: some recall the ease of earlier travel, while others remember the fear surrounding the first flights afterward. Patience with airport employees and fellow passengers allows room for both. Remembering how these changes began helps us see the human concerns behind a process that can otherwise feel impersonal.

[History of airport screening](#)

[How attacks changed aviation security](#)

[Airport security after September 11](#)

SERVICE FAR FROM HOME

Florida Answered the Call

Florida's connection to September 11 includes people who traveled north to assist after the attacks. The deployment record of Florida Task Force 2 offers a detailed example. At noon on September 11, FEMA placed the team on alert to prepare for work at the World Trade Center. Personnel began the practical steps required for deployment, including medical checks, equipment preparation and team assignments.

That evening, the team left the Miami Fire Training Center for Homestead, expecting air transportation. When that transportation did not materialize, FEMA authorized travel by road. The convoy departed on September 14 with 62 task force members and 10 drivers, bringing equipment and vehicles needed for the assignment. After staging in New Jersey, the task force reached its New York base on September 17 and worked in twelve-hour shifts.

The convoy included tractor-trailers, passenger buses, utility vehicles and a canine van. Communications had to be maintained between vehicles during the journey. An advance team visited the World Trade Center site before the full task force established its base.

These details reveal a part of disaster response that can disappear behind the more familiar images. Helping involves organizing people, moving supplies, maintaining communications and sustaining work over time. The team's account records an effort that depended on preparation and coordination as well as a willingness to serve. Its chronology also shows why different responding teams reached the area at different times.

As we remember the people who went, we can also make room in our thoughts for the people who waited for them to return. A distant deployment affects a responder's household and home community, even when those experiences do not appear in an operational report. A useful question for an anniversary conversation is simply whether someone in a family responded, and whether they would like to share that experience.

For Bellalago & Isles of Bellalago, this is an opportunity to recognize the reach of service beyond state lines. Florida was far from the places attacked, yet distance did not prevent Floridians from contributing their skills. Their example invites us to think about preparedness and volunteering in our own lives: knowing what we can offer, working through organized channels, and being willing to remain helpful after the first urgent attention has passed.

Florida Task Force 2 deployment record

A FLORIDA LIFE

Remembering CeeCee Lyles

CeeCee Ross Lyles was thirty-three years old, a flight attendant and a mother with a life rooted in Florida. Before joining United Airlines, she spent six years as a police officer and detective in Fort Pierce. She completed flight-attendant training in January 2001, beginning a new career only months before September 11. The National Park Service's account describes a woman who enjoyed travel and valued her time at home with two sons and two stepsons.

On September 11, Lyles was working aboard United Flight 93. During the hijacking, she called home and left a message for her husband. In another call shortly before the crash, they spoke and prayed together. These details are preserved in the memorial record as part of the story of a working mother trying to reach her family during an extraordinary emergency.

Flight 93 crashed near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, at 10:03 a.m. after passengers and crew resisted the hijackers. Lyles was among those whose lives were lost. In commemorating the flight, it is important to remember the individual people aboard, rather than allowing the name and number of the aircraft to stand in for all of them.

Her biography gives us several ways to begin that remembrance. We can think of a person changing careers, learning new responsibilities and balancing employment with family life. Those experiences are recognizable even to readers who never knew her. They help restore a sense of the living person behind a name on a memorial.

For Floridians, her story also brings a national tragedy closer to home. Fort Pierce is a real community of neighbors, workplaces and families, not simply a location in a historical caption. When we speak CeeCee Lyles's name, we can remember both her service and the everyday life that was taken from her. On this anniversary, giving attention to one person's story is a meaningful way to honor the many lives that make up the history of September 11.

[CeeCee Ross Lyles biography](#)

[September 11 timeline](#)

SARASOTA ON SEPTEMBER 11

A Florida School Became Part of History

A brief presidential statement made in Sarasota places Florida directly in the historical record of September 11. At 9:30 a.m., President George W. Bush spoke at Emma Booker Elementary School about the attacks on the World Trade Center. What had been a school visit had become a setting for remarks about a national emergency.

The archived statement is short. Bush described an apparent terrorist attack, said he would return to Washington, and spoke of federal resources being directed to help victims and families. He also asked those present to observe a moment of silence. Reading the statement today shows what was being publicly said at a particular point in the unfolding morning, rather than with the knowledge gained later.

The timing is significant. The second plane had struck the World Trade Center at 9:03 a.m. The Pentagon would be struck at 9:37 a.m., only minutes after the Sarasota remarks. The tower collapses and the crash of Flight 93 were still ahead. Placing the statement alongside the timeline helps explain how quickly events were developing and why early accounts must be understood in their moment.

For a community newsletter, the school setting offers another way to approach the anniversary. History can enter an ordinary place without warning. A classroom, workplace or family living room may become inseparable from a person's memory of an event. We should not assume that everyone who occupied such a place experienced it in the same way, or remembers the same details.

This Florida connection may prompt a conversation with someone who remembers where they were that morning. Ask what they first heard, who was with them, and what they understood at the time. Allow them to distinguish those first impressions from what they learned afterward. The Sarasota statement is valuable for the same reason: it preserves a moment before the full scope of the day was known. Remembering that uncertainty helps us read history with care and listen more thoughtfully to the people who lived it.

White House statement from Sarasota

September 11 timeline

A LIVING PLACE OF REMEMBRANCE

The Survivor Tree

Among the memorial's most recognizable symbols is a tree that survived the destruction of the World Trade Center. A damaged Callery pear tree was discovered in the rubble in October 2001. New York City parks staff cared for it, and it was eventually returned to the memorial site in 2010. It became known as the Survivor Tree.



The Survivor Tree in bloom. Photo: Jin S. Lee / 9/11 Memorial & Museum.

A tree is an unusual memorial because it does not remain visually fixed. Branches grow, leaves appear and fall, and blossoms mark another spring. Visitors may encounter the same tree in very different seasons. Its history remains connected to September 11, while its changing appearance offers a visible reminder that time continues to pass.

That image can be meaningful without suggesting that grief follows a simple pattern of recovery. A living tree cannot tell us how a bereaved person should feel. Nor should its survival be used to expect resilience from someone who is struggling. We can appreciate its growth while recognizing that people respond to loss in individual ways, and that an anniversary may bring comfort, sadness or both.

For readers who enjoy the trees and wildlife around Bellalago & Isles of Bellalago, the photograph may offer an accessible point of connection. You do not need to have visited New York to understand the quiet attention a tree can invite. Looking closely at its branches can provide a pause between reading the chronology of the attacks and hearing a neighbor's account.

If you share this story with a younger family member, begin with the facts: where the tree was found, who cared for it, and why it was brought back. Then let the child describe what the image means to them. There is no need to supply a single lesson. On this twenty-fifth anniversary, the Survivor Tree can serve as a place to reflect on the care that follows destruction, the patience involved in tending something damaged, and the importance of making room for remembrance within everyday life.

[The Survivor Tree](#)

CANADA OPENED ITS DOORS

The Town That Welcomed Thousands

When the United States closed its airspace on September 11, aircraft already traveling toward the country needed somewhere to go. Gander, Newfoundland, received thirty-eight commercial planes. A town of about ten thousand people, together with surrounding communities, suddenly became a temporary home for roughly sixty-seven hundred passengers and crew. Many had begun the day expecting to arrive somewhere entirely different.

Residents opened homes and community spaces to the unexpected visitors. The welcome required much more than an available runway. Travelers needed food, shelter and ways to manage the practical difficulties of being stranded. Gander's story is remembered because local people responded to those immediate needs with hospitality. The experience later became the basis of the musical *Come From Away*.

It is important to include the neighboring communities in this account. The response extended beyond one town, and different passengers were cared for in different places. Lewisporte, featured elsewhere in this newsletter, was one of those communities. Remembering that broader effort gives credit to the many people whose contributions made the welcome possible.

Imagine arriving without a planned hotel, unsure when you could continue your journey, while trying to understand frightening news. Now consider the difference made by someone offering a meal or a place to rest. We do not have to invent conversations or feelings for individual passengers to recognize how valuable practical help can be in such a situation.

For our own community, Gander offers a useful example of hospitality expressed through action. A person who needs assistance may first need something very ordinary: directions, a telephone, a chair, or someone willing to listen carefully. We may be unable to resolve the larger event that brought them to us, yet still be able to make the next few hours easier. On an anniversary often associated with scenes of destruction, the welcome in Newfoundland gives us another part of the record to preserve: communities encountering strangers in distress and finding ways to care for them.

Gander and the diverted flights

The story behind *Come From Away*

THE LEWISPORTE SCHOLARSHIP STORY

A Thank-You That Helped Children Attend College

Shirley Brooks-Jones was traveling on Delta Flight 15 from Germany to Atlanta when the events of September 11 interrupted the journey. The aircraft landed in Gander, Newfoundland, and passengers were taken to nearby Lewisporte. There, residents welcomed people who had arrived unexpectedly and needed help while waiting to continue their travels.

Brooks-Jones wanted the gratitude for that welcome to last beyond the emergency. In 2002, with help from fellow travelers and others, she established a scholarship fund at The Columbus Foundation. The Lewisporte Area Flight 15 Scholarship Fund supported students from the community that had cared for the stranded passengers. A disrupted airline journey became the beginning of an educational legacy.

In its 2019 recognition of Brooks-Jones and the fund, The Columbus Foundation reported that 291 scholarships had been awarded since the fund began. That historical figure gives a sense of the project's reach; it is not a current total. The foundation honored the effort with its inaugural Acorn Award, recognizing a response to kindness that had grown over time.

The story has two distinct acts of generosity. First came the residents' response to people in immediate need. Then came a traveler's decision to direct appreciation toward the next generation in that community. One did not erase the other; together, they created a relationship that extended beyond the circumstances of the original visit.

There is a thoughtful lesson here for anyone wondering how to thank people after receiving help. A thank-you can take many forms. Sometimes a letter is enough. Sometimes a person chooses to contribute time, share a skill, or support an opportunity for someone else. The most meaningful response may be one that recognizes what the helpers value, rather than simply trying to repay an expense.

For Bellalago & Isles of Bellalago, the scholarship story offers a hopeful addition to our remembrance of September 11. It invites us to notice how an act of kindness can influence a later decision. We should not assume that every good deed will become a lasting program, and it does not have to. The immediate care matters on its own. But in Lewisporte, the welcome also helped inspire something that could benefit students long after the passengers had gone home. Remembering that outcome honors both the people who opened their community and those who found a way to keep saying thank you.

[The Columbus Foundation on the scholarship fund](#)

COMPASSION FROM KENYA

Fourteen Cows for America

Wilson Kimeli Naiyomah, a Maasai student attending university in California, was visiting New York when the September 11 attacks occurred. When he returned to his community in Kenya months later, he told people what had happened. Their response became one of the most unusual and moving gestures of sympathy associated with the attacks.



Maasai community members express support.
Photo: Josh Haner / 9/11 Memorial & Museum.

Naiyomah offered a cow to the people of the United States. Others joined him, and the gift grew to fourteen cattle. In Maasai culture, cattle carry profound importance, so the offering represented something deeply valuable to the people giving it. The animals remained in Kenya to be cared for rather than being transported to America. The story later became the basis of the children's book *14 Cows for America*.

The gift also took a form that could be shared across the ocean. Naiyomah worked with artist James Cloutier on two commemorative paintings, one for the United States and one to remain in Kenya. The 9/11 Memorial & Museum holds one of these works, giving visitors another way to encounter the community's expression of sympathy.

To understand the gesture, it helps to resist measuring it only in dollars or in the practical needs of a wealthy country. The gift was an expression of compassion. Its significance came from what the community chose to share and the care with which that choice was made. A meaningful offering does not have to resemble the assistance we would have thought to request.

The photograph accompanying this story shows community members expressing support across a great geographical distance. It invites us to consider how people can respond to suffering outside their own country or daily experience. We do not need identical lives, languages or resources to recognize another person's loss as worthy of attention.

For families reading this newsletter together, the story opens a gentle conversation about giving. Ask what makes a gift precious: its price, its usefulness, the effort behind it, or what it means to the giver. Different answers can exist together. Then return to the people at the center of this account, who heard about a tragedy far away and chose to respond with something they valued. On the twenty-fifth anniversary, their offering deserves a place beside more familiar stories of assistance. It reminds us that sympathy reached America in forms as varied as the communities that expressed it.

[A Maasai village responds with compassion](#)

AN AIRCRAFT NAME AND A CHILDREN'S MURAL

Gratitude That Outlasted the Journey

The welcome given to diverted passengers in Canada did not end when their flights finally departed. Years later, gestures of thanks continued to recall what local communities had done. Two very different tributes, an aircraft name and a children's mural, show how gratitude can travel beyond the people who first experienced an act of kindness.



A mural thanking Gander. Photo: Jin Lee / 9/11 Memorial & Museum.

Lufthansa named an Airbus Gander/Halifax in appreciation of the two Canadian communities and their response to stranded travelers. The name placed those locations within the airline's own story. It acknowledged that the passenger experience during the emergency had depended on people and places far beyond the aircraft itself.

For the fifteenth anniversary, visitors to the 9/11 Memorial Museum helped create a mural for an elementary school in Gander. The artwork included airplanes, hearts, flags and messages of thanks. Young contributors could engage with the story of helping strangers even if they had no personal memory of the attacks. Through the mural, appreciation became something a new generation could express.

These tributes invite a distinction between remembering an event and inheriting responsibility for its memory. A child does not need to pretend to remember September 11 to participate honestly in its commemoration. Learning what happened, asking questions and thanking those who helped are meaningful forms of participation in their own right.

That possibility matters in Bellalago & Isles of Bellalago, where families include people of different ages and experiences. Some residents can describe the day firsthand; others know it through relatives, classrooms or memorials. An anniversary can bring those perspectives together without asking everyone to speak in the same voice. The mural offers one model: learn about a specific act of care, then find a sincere way to acknowledge it.

A name painted on an aircraft and a drawing made by a child are very different objects. Both can keep a connection visible after an immediate crisis has passed. They encourage us to think about the people we still want to thank, and the stories of kindness we would like younger family members to carry forward.

Gander and the Lufthansa tribute

The children's mural for Gander

LEAVING MANHATTAN BY WATER

The Rescue Carried Out by Ordinary Boats

As people fled Lower Manhattan on September 11, the waterfront became an escape route. Ferries, tugboats and private vessels participated in a large maritime evacuation. The Coast Guard called for assistance, and boat crews helped transport people away from the disaster. Estimates commonly place the number evacuated by water at about five hundred thousand, although totals vary by source.

The response is sometimes overshadowed by the better-known images of emergency vehicles and firefighters. Yet it shows another way that people used the resources available to them. Boats that normally served other purposes became a means of moving frightened people away from danger. The waterfront was part of the response, not merely the edge of the scene.

Melissa Shuman's personal account in this newsletter provides a direct human connection. She describes her cousin ferrying people off the island while unsure whether his own family was safe. Her submitted words are reproduced in full in the residents' section. They stand as her family's recollection alongside the broader historical account of the evacuation.

Large numbers can make a rescue difficult to picture. Consider instead the repeated act of bringing people aboard, making a crossing and helping them disembark. An evacuation depends on that process happening safely many times, across many vessels. The scale emerges from individual crews and passengers, rather than from one single dramatic moment.

For those in our community who enjoy boating, the story may be especially tangible. It offers a reason to think about seamanship, readiness and responsibility toward others on the water. In an actual emergency, assistance must be coordinated with the authorities managing the response; the lesson is not to rush into danger without direction.

On this anniversary, the boatlift deserves to be remembered as part of the day's wider history of service. It reminds us that responding to a crisis can involve applying an ordinary skill in an extraordinary situation. It also gives us another group of people to thank: the mariners and crews who helped turn a route out of Manhattan into a route toward safety.

The maritime evacuation of September 11

A NAME THAT REMEMBERS

Tuesday's Children

By Debbie Rambis

During my volunteer grief work, I assisted the organization then known as Tuesday's Children. Its name referred to Tuesday, September 11, 2001, the day the attacks took so many lives and left children facing the loss of a parent. For me, including the organization in this anniversary tribute is a way to recognize the work of supporting families after the immediate emergency has passed.

Founded in the aftermath of the attacks, Tuesday's Children provided support to children and families affected by traumatic loss. The original name placed children at the center of the public's attention. It asked people to remember that the consequences of the day would continue within families, including as children grew older and reached new stages of life.

The organization is now called Tuesday's Promise. Its current mission emphasizes lifelong support, meaningful connection and accessible programs for people affected by traumatic loss. Its community includes families affected by September 11 and military families of the fallen. The change in name reflects a commitment that extends beyond childhood and beyond a single anniversary., especially as even the youngest children are now in their mid-twenties.

When we remember September 11, it is easy to focus on the hours of the attacks. A family's story continues through the years afterward. A milestone, a familiar place or an ordinary family gathering may carry the absence of someone who should have been there. We can acknowledge that continuing absence without assuming we know what any particular person needs or feels.

For our neighbors in Bellalago & Isles of Bellalago, I hope this anniversary offers room for that kind of attention. Listening does not require finding the perfect words or trying to make a painful story end on a positive note. Sometimes the most respectful response is to let someone speak, to accept that they may prefer privacy, and to remember that support can still matter many years later.

Tuesday's Children is part of my own connection to this history. As we mark twenty-five years, I want to recognize the importance of continuing to care for the people whose lives were changed. Remembering the day and supporting those who carry its losses belong together.

[Tuesday's Promise mission and history](#)

[The organization's name change](#)

A COMMUNITY REFLECTION

Remembering Through Kindness

An anniversary gives a community an opportunity to pause together, but it does not require everyone to remember in the same way. Some of our neighbors experienced September 11 directly. Others lost relatives, friends or coworkers. Some were children, and some were not yet born. Each person arrives at this twenty-fifth anniversary with a different relationship to the history.

The accounts in this newsletter help us make room for those differences. They include memories of waiting for news, responding to the disaster, losing loved ones and witnessing scenes that remain difficult to describe. We thank the contributors for sharing their words. We also recognize that others may hold equally important experiences they prefer not to share publicly.

If a neighbor chooses to tell you a story, let them decide how much to say. An open question can be more helpful than an assumption. You might ask whether they would like to talk about the person they remember, or whether they would rather spend time together doing something ordinary. There is no requirement to turn a conversation into a lesson or a public tribute.

For younger family members, remembrance can begin with a small amount of clear history and a chance to ask questions. A story about a particular person, a community that welcomed stranded travelers, or a living memorial may offer a starting point. Let their questions guide the conversation rather than expecting them to feel what adults remember feeling.

We can also choose a practical act of care: contact someone we have been meaning to check on, help a neighbor with an everyday task, or give time to a community effort. These actions do not compensate for the lives taken. They express the kind of attention we want to give the people around us now.

In Bellalago & Isles of Bellalago, the value of this tribute lies partly in what happens after it is read. May it encourage thoughtful conversations, respect for private grief and an enduring willingness to listen. We remember the people whose lives were lost, and we care for the people who continue to carry their memory.

PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

Our Neighbors Remember

These personal accounts appear exactly as submitted. Original wording and punctuation have been preserved. There are many more with related experiences, sometimes too personal to share. Know these are only a few of many impacted.

Tom Crary

As a executive manager in the NYS Dept of Taxation and Finance located in Albany NY i visited the Manhattan District office many times. It was located on floors 86 & 87 of the south tower. We lost 40 co-workers that day many i knew well, several close friends.

Within 4 hours of the attack our building was surrounded by US Army troops guarding the building as the center of state financial data .

In the somber days afterwords I attended many memorial services. Not a dry eye to be seen in the thousands of employees attending. Gut wrenching. Every year and many other days my thoughts go back to all those , friendships ended. 100's of volunteers manning phones to handle the 100k phone calls from around the world donating to recovery efforts and ultimately establishing college funds for children of the deceased and horribly injured.

My brother was one of those volunteers who went to NYC in the recovery efforts.

I'll never forget that for as long as I live .

Prayers to all.

Jamiee Troast Raab

We lived in North Jersey at the time, 20 minutes from the George Washington Bridge and my father-in-law and brother-in-law both worked in the city not far from the World Trade Center. When we saw the news, time stood still! It was terrifying waiting for news! Before we moved down here, we went to NYC to visit the memorial there and it was extremely hard and emotional going through the memorial, reliving that day and the days that followed!

Jen Milne Crane

I lived in NJ and lost a cousin and a uncle, my uncle survived the 1st bombing years earlier but lost his life on this attach. Both of my brothers were Jersey City firefighters and were over there for weeks after 9/11. My city if middletown was one of the hardest city's hit with deaths. We were at so many memorial services of friends that lost love ones. I will never forget. The memorial and museum is beautiful and anyone going to NY should see it.

PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

Our Neighbors Remember

Thomas and Brenda LaRose

Thomas and Brenda LaRose. As an NYPD Officer on that infamous day, I was post changed from an election detail and sent to the World Trade Center Buildings as the attacks played out and spent 3 months consecutively there after on posts about the area. After being promoted to Sergeant and assigned to a precinct in Manhattan, I was assigned Counter Terrorism details in the vicinity and for years we were still recovering remains of victims.. Even on the birhgtest of late summer, early fall days there's a somber feeling cast by those who not only remember but lived that day losing friends and loved ones. I believe people didn't and won't forget.....but through familiarity have become contempt...

Rae Muniz

We lost a very good family friend Abigail Medina Cales worked for Cantor Fitzgerald on the 92nd Floor of the North Tower never recovered never cloosure to family and friends. Abigail was 42 married with two loving daughters. Forever in Our Hearts.

Blanca I. Garcia Otero

My son-in-law worked at the Embassy Suite across the street from the Twin Towers. He was a pastry chef at the hotel. When they had him evacuated from the hotel, he experienced dreadful scenes watching people jumping off the tower and actually witnessing one of the towers collapse. He was traumatized for months and it affected him tremendously. So sad.

Melissa Shuman

My cousin was shuttling people on the ferry off the island while not knowing if his family was safe. (They were). My uncle played bag pipes at ground zero. And I worked with a man who was on the phone with his daughter begging her to get out of the building as the second plane hit and the call dropped. My best friend worked at a hospital in Jersey and they were all called in to take care of survivors that never came.

PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

Our Neighbors Remember

Donna Marie Trigo

My mom was sitting in the front yard with our neighbor when her husband called to let her know he was ok and in the stairwell trying to get out. The phone went dead and she lost her husband and father to her 2 children. A young man from our church Jeremy Glick lost his life in the plane that they tried to rush the cockpit in doing so they saved many other life's. I honor them all! My niece was stuck in NY for hours she worked in the building right next to the towers. Thank God she made it home.

While I was making a delivery and witnessed the second plane hitting the tower and watching a man jump from that same tower with his briefcase in hand.

My mind couldn't understand! Why? Who?

How could anyone do this? All I could think of was getting home that day picking up my children at school. I eventually made it to their school and was very shaken up the secretary asked me if I was ok I said our country is under attack and I just wanted my children. They didn't know and all went into the conference room to put the news on. We were all in shock. Even while writing this tears just keep falling from my eyes. I will never forget 9/11 no matter how many years go by. As a retired first responder I honor all those who bravely entered those towers in hopes of saving life's. To all the firefighters, first responders and police officers that lost their life's I pray for their families! Thank you for all who served to help with the countless days weeks months years of sifting through ground zero!

May God bless you all!

A promise to keep their stories alive

Twenty-five years later, September 11 remains personal for many of our neighbors. We thank everyone who entrusted us with these memories and honor those who prefer to remember privately. May we hold the families, survivors and responders in our hearts, speak the names of those we miss, and help younger generations understand why this day continues to matter. Their lives deserve to be remembered.

We remember. We listen. We care for one another.



This artwork symbolizes the individuality of every life lost and the promise to remember them.

Created by Spencer Finch, it is titled *Trying to Remember the Color of the Sky on That September Morning*. It contains 2,983 hand-painted blue squares—one for each person killed in the September 11 attacks and the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. Each square is a different shade, honoring the uniqueness of each person. The blues recall the clear sky that morning and the way each of us remembers it differently.

About the artwork

The inscription from Virgil reads:
“No day shall erase you from the memory of time.”

Here, those words express a promise: the passing years will never erase the people who died or their importance to those who loved them. Together, the individual squares form a shared remembrance, while each retains its own distinct place.



This is the Last Column, displayed in the 9/11 Memorial Museum. The 36-foot steel column once supported the South Tower and was the final column removed from Ground Zero. During the recovery effort, workers and victims' loved ones covered it with photographs, messages and tributes, turning a piece of wreckage into a deeply personal memorial. 9/11 Memorial & Museum

The large markings visible in the photograph honor those killed on September 11:

PAPD 37: 37 Port Authority police officers.

NYPD 23: 23 New York City police officers.

FDNY 343: 343 members of the New York City Fire Department.

SQ 41: Squad 41, a firefighting unit that lost six members.

Museum account of Squad 41

The column symbolizes loss, service, endurance and the determination to remember. Its inscriptions preserve the grief and bonds of people who spent months searching for loved ones and recovering those who died.

On May 30, 2002, it was ceremonially removed, draped with an American flag and escorted by an honor guard, marking the end of the recovery period. Today, its battered steel and personal tributes honor both the lives lost and those who stayed to do the difficult work afterward. Museum history of the Last Column

The square metal fixtures on the concrete wall are tieback anchor plates. They connect to steel anchors extending behind the wall, helping brace it against pressure from the surrounding soil and groundwater.

The concrete itself is a preserved section of the World Trade Center's slurry wall, the underground barrier built to keep water from the nearby Hudson River out of the site. Additional anchors helped stabilize it during recovery after the towers collapsed.

The wall's survival gave it symbolic meaning: something that held firm amid tremendous destruction. Preserved in the museum's Foundation Hall, it represents endurance and the strength of the foundations that remained.

9/11 Memorial Museum background



This is the actual garage door from the Brooklyn Heights firehouse that housed Engine 205 and Ladder 118. Its mural honors eight members of that firehouse who died responding to the September 11 attacks. [9/11 Memorial & Museum](#)

The eight large stars above the skyline are its most personal feature: each represents one of those eight firefighters. The museum describes them as stars continuing to shine over the city.

The story behind the stars

The Brooklyn Bridge connects the image to their home borough, while the American flag evokes national mourning and unity. Together, the imagery can be read as a tribute to firefighters whose memory remains part of the city they served.

What makes it especially moving is that this was an everyday working firehouse door, transformed into a memorial to colleagues who never came home.



As your Board of Directors, we know this brief newsletter holds only a few of the countless stories, memories and emotions carried by our neighbors. Many remain unspoken because they are too personal or painful to share. Please know that your silence is respected, your grief matters, and your experience belongs in our remembrance, whether or not you ever put it into words.

On this twenty-fifth anniversary, we recognize the solemn meaning of Patriot Day—the day we were all brought to our knees. We remember the lives taken, the families forever changed, and those who stepped forward to help, often while carrying unimaginable losses of their own.

For some, twenty-five years may feel like yesterday. There is no timetable for grief and no single way to honor this day. Whether you find comfort in prayer, quiet reflection, telling a story or simply being with someone you love, we hold you in our thoughts.

To every neighbor carrying a memory we have not heard: you do not have to share your story for us to care.

You are part of this community, and you are not forgotten.

With remembrance, compassion and respect,

Your Board of Directors
Bellalago & Isles of Bellalago