

Ten years after the tragic events of September 11, there are lessons to be learned about war and terrorism—and the remarkable resilience of Americans everywhere. These organizations are testament to the enduring belief that good can come out of tragedy.



The Parness family proudly looks out over New York City.



Time to Remember



BY CELIA SHATZMAN





The Parness family: Sandy Hauser; Josh, 9; Evan, 12; and Jeff.



Paying Tribute

A few of the commemorative events happening across the country:

New York City Dedication ceremony for the National Memorial at the World Trade Center on 9/11. The site opens to the public the next day; free concert at St. Patrick's Cathedral celebrating peace.

9/11 WTC Memorial Floating Lantern Ceremony on the Hudson River. (911memorial.org, septemberconcert.org, prepareny.com)

Arlington, Virginia, Police, Fire & Sheriff Memorial 5K race on September 10; all age groups are welcome to run the flat course, which includes parts of the Pentagon. (Arlington911race.com)

Boston, Massachusetts Day of Remembrance blood drive at Fenway Park. (Redcrossblood.org)

Morrison, Colorado, Stair Climb along a route equal to the 110 stories of the Twin Towers; not a race, but a challenge meant to encourage reflection. (911stairclimb.org)

Clements, California, Memorial Rodeo, hosted by the Clements Buckaroos, an all-volunteer nonprofit. A portion of admissions fees will go toward programs that benefit injured firefighters, policemen and their families. (Clements buckaroos.com)

FamilyCircle.com
For a list of more events, go to familycircle.com/911

NEW YORK SAYS THANK YOU



Jeff Parness, then a corporate finance consultant, still remembers the shock and pain he felt upon learning that his business partner, Hagay Shefi, had died in the attack on the World Trade Center. He struggled to find a way to honor the memory of his friend and the others who perished that day. In 2003 an idea finally came to him—courtesy of his 5-year-old son, Evan. When the boy heard about the devastating wildfires that swept through southern California that October, he suggested sending his old toys to kids who had lost their homes. Four days and hundreds of e-mails later, Jeff set off across country in a U-Haul truck filled with kid-friendly donations from neighbors and friends. “I put a huge banner on the truck that read ‘New York Says Thank You,’” he says. “I wanted to make a statement that New Yorkers had not forgotten the love and support we received from America after 9/11.”

Jeff decided to organize the New York Says Thank You Foundation (NYSTYF), a service project that would send hundreds of people from New York City each September to help other communities affected by disaster. Since then some 10,000

people—including firefighters, family members of 9/11 victims, survivors and ordinary citizens—have stepped up via newyorksaysthankyou.org to plant trees, and rebuild homes, churches and even a Boy Scout ranch in tornado-ravaged towns in Illinois, Indiana, Texas, Kansas and Iowa. After Hurricane Katrina, NYSTYF volunteers made 27 trips to the Gulf Coast, and later this year will assist the Build an Ark Animal Rescue Foundation of Ellijay, Georgia, in repairing a badly damaged barn housing companion animals for seniors and the disabled.

Jeff draws upon his vast business connections to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars in cor-



NYSTYF volunteers raising the first wall of Baker Chapel church in DeGonia Springs, Indiana, on the anniversary of 9/11 in 2006.



Alessandra Kellermann and her son, Ed, 12.



porate and individual contributions, which pay for supplies as well as the volunteers' airfare and housing. But NYSTYF is also a family business that involves his wife, Sandy Hauser, and sons Josh, 9, and Evan, now 12. "The boys have grown up banging nails next to New York City firefighters in towns across the country," Jeff says. "As a parent, I want to use 9/11 to teach kids that by being kind, they can transform tragedy into something hopeful. If you can inspire a generation this way, the impact of what our kids will do will be immeasurable."

HOMEFRONT HUGS



As the former wife of an Air Force pilot, **Alessandra Kellermann**, 45, knows how hard it is when a loved one is deployed overseas—the loneliness, the constant fear and worry, the deep sense of isolation. She also remembers the great comfort that sending a care package can

bring. That's why the Ann Arbor, Michigan, mom founded Homefront Hugs USA shortly after American troops were deployed to the Mideast in the wake of 9/11. Soldiers can sign themselves up—along with their families—at homefronthugs.org, specifying what they need, and the group matches them with volunteers who will mail them the items every month. "Whether they have families or not, our troops need to feel that there is widespread support," Alessandra says. "They just want to be in touch with somebody and are happy to know others are thinking of them."

And many are. More than 10,000 members have pitched in so far. In some cases they "adopt" servicemen who have been enrolled in Homefront by caring commanders. Military wives and moms-to-be sign up, requesting baby shower items, a magazine subscription or small gift card, stickers and comics for the kids, or DVDs for the family to watch together. Alessandra, who puts in 40-plus-hour weeks for the organization, also refers soldiers to agencies that can provide other services



The Winuk family: Jay; Melanie, 8; Carolyn; Justin, 14; and Jay's father, Seymour.

they might need, including mental health counseling, financial support or assistance filing military paperwork. And with her 12-year-old son, Ed, she created the Homefront Hugs Kids Club, which has now expanded to several chapters across the country, encouraging children to get involved, by wrapping packages, sending cards to soldiers and participating in local volunteer projects alongside kids whose parents are deployed. "When they can give back in their own community and come face-to-face with the people they're helping, that makes a big difference," Alessandra says. "And we hope they're learning what our soldiers are fighting for—freedom—and that it's their gift to all of us."

MY GOOD DEED



Glenn Winuk was an attorney by profession, a caregiver by nature. When the volunteer EMT technician learned that the Twin Towers had been hit, he ran from his downtown law office to the South Tower, medical bag in hand. He

perished when the building collapsed, but his heroism and lifelong devotion to community service inspired his brother, **Jay Winuk**, 53, to cofound My Good Deed, a group that spearheaded the move to have September 11 officially designated as a National Day of Service and Remembrance. After members waged a long, eight-year campaign on Capitol Hill, their wish finally came true in 2009. That year more than 5 million people from all 50 states and 165 countries stepped up to volunteer and commemorate the anniversary.

Since then the organization has launched mygooddeed.org, a website that lists more than 850,000 local, national and international groups, making it easy for people to find charitable causes that match their interests, see what kind of support is needed and pledge their services. "It's a way to move forward while honoring those who perished and rose in service," Jay says. "It's the answer to the question around the country that many people have, which is, what am I supposed to do on 9/11? They want to mark the date somehow and be respectful."



The plaque in Glenn J. Winuk Memorial Park in Jericho, New York; Carolyn and Jay Winuk with President Barack Obama at the World Trade Center 9/11 Memorial in New York City.

For the upcoming 10th anniversary, My Good Deed is staging service events in 20 cities across the country with the goal of getting 10 million Americans to volunteer. To inspire students, the website includes lesson plans on 9/11 as well as downloadable toolkits to help classrooms organize their own projects. Jay and his wife, Carolyn, make sure kids Justin, 14, and Melanie, 8, participate in annual events in New York City, such as school beautification programs. “The events surrounding 9/11 are a tricky thing to teach,” he says. “These are heavy issues, and we believe that history books shouldn’t reflect just the attacks and terrorism—they have to include the other side of the story. Future generations should learn about how good people of the world responded.” ●

Groups at a Glance

VOICES OF SEPTEMBER 11TH

Sharing memories, no matter how painful, can be cathartic. That’s why Mary Fetchet, who lost her 24-year-old son, Brad, at the World Trade Center, founded a program to provide support services for victims’ families, rescue workers and survivors (voicesofseptember11.org). In 2006 it launched the Living Memorial project, an online tribute where friends and relatives of the dead tell stories and share keepsakes like photos, artwork and quilts, all of which are scanned and stored in a digital archive.

More than 10,000 individuals have participated and 60,000 images have been collected. The material will eventually be transferred to the museum at Ground Zero. “We focus on the person’s life, not death,” says Mary, 50, who lives in New Canaan, Connecticut. “Ultimately, this is a testament to resilience and survival.”

REMEMBER ME ROSE GARDEN

Sue Casey, 60, of Portland, Oregon, had never been to the East Coast, but was deeply touched by the events of 9/11. Inspired by her hometown’s nickname, the City of Roses, she founded a nonprofit with the goal of creating three gardens—in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Shanksville, Pennsylvania. To raise funds, Remember Me has selected 11 rose varieties and named each for a group of people who perished (“Firefighter” is a red hybrid tea rose, and “Soaring Spirits” a pink and yellow striped variety that honors the victims who worked in the towers). Visitors can go to remember-me-rose.org and purchase the blooms, and a portion of sales is donated to the group. The first garden, at Shanksville, will be completed in 2015. “These places will be a kind of sanctuary,” says Sue. “We hope that by seeing the beauty of the roses, people will feel uplifted and renewed.”

MICHAEL LYNCH MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

To his nine siblings, firefighter Michael Lynch was a brave, beloved brother—and a genuine hero who sacrificed his life trying to save others at the World Trade Center. “We thought scholarships for children of firefighters and other victims of the attacks would be a good way to preserve his memory,” says his brother John. Raising funds through donations, golf tournaments, dinners and corporate grants, the group (mlynch.org) has given over \$1.6 million to 75 students.

Photos (from top): Erin Patrice O'Brien; Courtesy of Carolyn and Jay Winuk.