

# Honoring the faces behind 'a faceless act'

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No one can touch it but everyone can go there. And undoubtedly many will — to shed a tear, feel less alone, share a story or simply sit and remember.

In time for the sixth anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Voices of September 11th has compiled an interactive digital archive, the 9/11 Living Memorial, honoring the lives and stories that will forever be linked to that day.

Although it is beyond doubtful that anyone would forget the nearly 3,000

people who died, this tribute ensures that it is not only names that are remembered, but lives. It is not just dates, reports and political reactions that will be preserved, it is personal experiences, emotions and final words of love from the lips of those who perished. It is the voices of both those who died — including New Canaanites Brad Fetchet, Joe Coppo and Eamon McEaney, and those who lived — including Brad's mother, Mary, who founded Voices of September 11th.

"I'm on a different calendar year here than the rest of the world," Mrs. Fetchet told a colleague from her office last

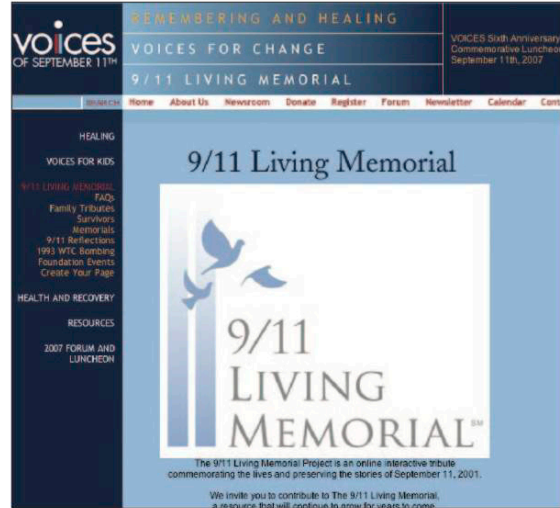
Thursday, explaining that she might be free for dinner once the sixth anniversary has passed.

Surrounded by children's artwork and sporting a Focus Vitamin Water that matched her pink jacket, she spoke with the *Advertiser* last week at her 93 Cherry Street office, which will move to 161 Cherry Street on September 14.

"It seems like every year the organization has taken on more responsibility," she said, with the group's "morale officer" (an English Springer Spaniel named Cody) at her feet.

What began as a family support group

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Voices of September 11th is launching the 9/11 Living Memorial.

## 9/11: Living memorial on Internet puts faces on "a faceless event"

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has grown into a political force, pushing for the 9/11 Commission and its recommendations, and is becoming a principal guardian of the history of September 11th.

Mrs. Fetchet said Voices has been "working hand-in-hand" with archivists and historians from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Library of Congress, the U.S. National Archives, and the Smithsonian, among others.

"I think after the fifth anniversary, which was really a milestone, people are willing to or have the strength to begin reflect-

ing," she said. "But my fear is that most Americans have some photograph or article or personal story about 9/11 and if we don't start now, those stories are going to be lost."

In addition to the victims of the September 11th attacks, the Living Memorial also commemorates the 1993 World Trade Center bombing.

Voices took on the project, which was started in 2002 by September's Mission, in 2006.

It is available to anyone in the world with Internet access, found at 911livingmemorial.org, and will eventually become part of the World Trade Center Memorial

Museum at ground zero.

A primary feature is the "family tributes" section, which commemorates the lives of each victim with biographies, photos, eulogies, stories, the *New York Times* "Portraits of Grief," and information about foundations created by the families. It will soon include steaming audio and video as well.

Many people have read the names, seen the pictures, contemplated the ages and watched desperate but defiant family members clutch photographs at ground zero.

But scrolling through the tributes in the Living Memorial — a

grinning four-year-old on her way to Disneyland; a bright-eyed college graduate in his cap and gown; a woman on the beach with the wind in her hair; a pepper-haired firefighter with a no nonsense stare; a mother holding her baby girl; a new husband giving the peace sign — takes the understanding to another level. Looking into their eyes and reading messages from those they left behind is a personal journey, which mingles the sadness of death with the celebration of life.

"So many memorials have the names, but I think it's understanding who the people were

that is critical. In a sense I think it reverses the intent of terrorism, which is a faceless act of violence," said Mrs. Fetchet, pulling a tissue from the box on the table.

"It brings the person alive," she added. "It creates a legacy so in a way they live on."

Mrs. Fetchet said Brad's tribute page will eventually include the message he left her from Tower Two after the first plane hit Tower One. Family videos and footage from last year's New Canaan High Alumni Game, at which Brad's jersey number was retired, may also be incorporated.

Voices of September 11th has been meeting with families and holding workshops to collect items and stories for the archive.

Thursday, Mrs. Fetchet said 850 tribute pages had been started. By Friday, more than 1,200 names were up, some with photos, some still waiting.

In addition to the family tributes, the archive also contains: A detailed directory of more than 500 September 11th memorials around the world; creative responses to the attacks in the form of songs, poems, artwork and quilts; and stories from survivors that provide, according to the Web site, "a record of the confusion and courage, the unity and loss, that make up our collective memory of that day."

Voices is also working to document the response, recovery and rebuilding of more than 200 companies that were directly affected by the attacks.

New Canaan High School senior Richie McGinniss was unsure what to expect interning with Voices this summer, but he said working on the Living Memorial turned out to be a "gratifying" experience.

"This is the first job I've ever interned where I felt I was contributing to something that was really significant," he told the *Advertiser* last week.

Living in New Canaan and playing hockey like Brad did is "a constant reminder of 9/11," he added. "Coming from that, I felt a little bit closer to the whole thing."

Jackson Krupp, an NCHS junior, said he learned a lot about the World Trade Center and post-September 11th security measures.

"I thought it was a great experience to be working hand-in-hand with Mary and be able to do all these things that would make a difference in people's lives," he said, adding, "It was definitely worthwhile."

Both boys described Mrs. Fetchet as a unique and positive force in the workshop.

Mrs. Fetchet said the nine college and high school interns, who spent the summer posting graphics and compiling information, were "instrumental."

"They've just been an incredible resource and asset to the organization," she said.

The Living Memorial will be formally launched on Monday, September 10, at the Voices of September 11th "Preserving 9/11" forum in New York City. (See related story on Page 10.)

Those interested in creating a tribute, submitting something to the memorial, or volunteering should call the Voices of September 11th office at 966-3911 or 866-505-3911.

"We welcome anyone in the community that has expertise in the area of technology, archiving, public relations, anything an organization would need," Mrs. Fetchet said. "And we certainly invite anybody that wants to donate their time as an intern as well ... I think it will make a major contribution to the success of the project."

More information and submission forms can also be found online at 911livingmemorial.org, or through the Voices of September 11th Web site at voicesofsept11.org.



Volunteers who worked on the Internet memorial to victims of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks are, from left, Liz Damm, Kirsten Boreen, Jackson Krupp, Christian Wolfgrueber, Richie McGinniss, Craig DiFulvio and Chris Fetchet. Max Shaw and Teddy Citron also participated.