

A FAMILY VISIT TO THE 9/11 MEMORIAL MUSEUM

We almost didn't go to the September 11th Memorial Museum on Thursday, the day it was dedicated and opened, even though we had 9:30 pm tickets. By the mid-afternoon I was starting to feel sick, and kept thinking that there was no way I could drive on Route 3 feeling as awful as I did. I attended back-to-back lacrosse games, but I kept my distance from the other parents on the bleachers. By the second game, Charlotte's, I decided I was coming down with the flu: my head hurt, my stomach hurt and I felt queasy. And then it dawned on me: I wasn't sick, I was simply dreading this visit to the museum, and I had been, for several days now.

Earlier in the day I watched some of the dedication ceremony on TV, but I turned it off because I was getting agitated listening to the stories of those who escaped. My husband, Jeffrey R. Smith, who worked for Sandler O'Neill on the 104th floor of the South Tower, did not escape. He and hundreds of other people heard and heeded the mysterious announcement that "the building is secure."



Photo by Gary Cirlin

We drove into the City at 9pm. I was irritable, and my girls knew it. My eldest daughter, Maggie, said "I've got 'calm' music ready to play, Mom," and Charlotte said, "Yeah, we know you're cranky." Sometimes I am amazed by how my daughters know how to handle me.

On the drive in I shared my two fears about the museum with them. The first they knew: I feared something of Jeff's would be in the museum, something of his that someone found in the rubble and was never identified as belonging to him. The second fear was that because I could not remember which pictures of Jeff I had given the museum, I had no idea what they had or didn't have.

"I really don't know which pictures I gave them," I told my daughters, now 15 and 13. "I remember driving to Rutgers with a basket of pictures to donate to the museum. I remember I got lost, I remember I was crying, and I remember one of you called me in the middle of this day needing lunch or something. I was stuck on Route 1 in traffic, with pictures of Daddy on the seat next to me, and a mapquest map in my hand."

It's not a pretty picture, looking back on that day. A lot of what I was required to do back then did not reflect well on me; it's not easy to be gracious when people are asking you to bring your husband's death certificate, your marriage certificate, and your kids' birth certificates along with you. Most people do not know where this stuff is; I've got a file, good to go.

I finally got to Rutgers, and met with the women who were doing the collecting for a museum that was barely in the planning stages. This was back when every other town in America had a memorial, but NYC did not. There was bickering between families and state officials over unidentified remains, the location of the buildings, a mosque.

I gave them my pictures, and insisted they digitize them right then. This decision would make me late for school pick up, which put me

ZURICH GLOBAL VOLUNTEER DAY



The 9/11 Tribute Center has a strong partnership with Zurich. We share a commitment to remembering 9/11, paying tribute to both the loss and to the global response of service and compassion that occurred in the aftermath. On June 4th, the 9/11 Tribute Center welcomed about 30 Zurich employees who were participating in Corporate Global Volunteer Day.

The day began with a brief tour of the 9/11 Tribute Center, led by Board President, Lee Ielpi. Participants shared their own personal recollections of 9/11 and their reflections about the impact that 9/11 has had on our global community. Zurich employees read and catalogued response cards written by visitors about their 9/11 experiences and thoughts for the future. These poignant statements and drawings are written in English and many languages from around the world, and ultimately displayed in the 9/11 Tribute Center or shared online via our website. Tribute's curator, Meri Lobel, explained the many categories and themes and guided the curatorial work. At various intervals, the participants read aloud some of the more poignant and meaningful cards. They will identify and select cards that will be scanned and placed into our searchable database. Many of the Zurich participants assisted us in translating cards from dozens of languages into English.

Tribute's relationship with Zurich is predicated on our mutual experience of the terrorist attacks and our commitment to remembrance. On 9/11, Zurich lost four employees, John Keohane, Peggy Alario, Kathy Moran and Lud



Photo by Gary Cirlin

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RESOURCES

Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Call 1-800-LIFENET

Free & multilingual. Available 24/7. Mental health professionals help find mental health and substance abuse services. Visit their website for details, clicking on LifeNet, <http://www.mhaofnyc.org>.

American Psychological Association

Call 1-800-374-2723

Referrals on everything from managing traumatic stress to coping with terrorism. Visit their website for details, <http://locator.apa.org>.

Faithful Response

Call 516-679-0080

Free, faith-based mental health programs for Long Island residents. Visit their website for details, <http://www.faithfulresponse.org>.

Columbia University & NY State Psychiatric Institute

Call 212-543-5367

Does the grief over the death of a loved one on 9/11 still interfere with your life? Free treatment for those eligible.

Mount Sinai Consortium

Call 1-888-702-0630

Medical monitoring for workers and volunteers. Visit their website for details, <http://www.wtcexams.org>.

FDNY

Call 212-570-1693

Service for all active and retired NYC firefighters and EMS workers.

WTC Centers of Excellence

Visit their website for details, <http://www.nyc.gov>.

WTC Environmental Health Center

Call 877-982-0107

A FAMILY VISIT TO THE NEW 9/11 MEMORIAL MUSEUM (cont'd)

into a mild panic because we had recently moved from Greenwich Village to New Jersey and I knew few people at my daughters' school. I didn't know who to call for help, but I would not part with my pictures. And then I sat there while they digitized pictures of my wonderful husband, the man with whom I thought I would spend the rest of my life holding hands. I know I cried, and I think I yelled a bit, too – about my annoying adventure to find the building where we sat, my anger of having to do this, and how I was going to be late picking up my kids. It was not Ellen at Her Best.

On Thursday night as we approached the Lincoln Tunnel I told my girls I was sorry if I didn't submit the right pictures. "I am sure I will be able to add some if we're not happy with what we see, okay?" We parked the car, and began the walk to what used to be my husband's place of work.

We had seen the Reflecting Pools once before, but unfortunately it was not a good experience. Some tourists gawked at us while we were doing a grave rubbing of Jeff's name, and then they made jokes about an airplane that happened to be flying overhead. I yelled at them, but they gave us the finger. I asked a guard to kick them out, but he was ineffective, despite the fact that I was wearing WTC Family Member ID tags around my neck. A week later I called someone official who said "so sorry." I tried not to think of this as we approached the pools.

The pools are breathtaking at night; we found Jeff's name and I asked a firefighter in dress uniform to take our picture. No one bothered us. As we went through security, I was grateful to know that the only other people in the museum at this time were Family Members and Rescue Workers, and that we had all the time in the world to take a look; the museum was open for 24 hours.

Immediately we were engulfed by the sheer size of the museum; huge walls stretch up forever, and I was reminded of the vastness of the WTC lobby and the Towers themselves. It is a beautiful space. We found Jeff's picture, a wedding shot, and I cried.

"My husband, your daddy, should not be on the wall of a museum," I said to the girls. "He should be here with us." We stood there, the three of us, holding onto each other, crying. No one approached us, no one gawked

at us; it was as if we were alone. Charlotte remarked that it was good "not to be a part of the museum, ourselves." I commend the museum for this small gift.

We found the touch screen tables and Maggie typed in Jeff's name. I cried and laughed with relief when I saw the pictures. Of course I submitted the right ones; of course I did. My in-laws submitted pictures also, and they recorded two short stories of Jeff through Story Corps; I have an appointment to do the same shortly. We could hear other families echoing our own cries and laughter as they looked at pictures of their loved ones, but we did not talk to anyone; I made eye contact with only one other visitor the whole night, and it was brief.

The rest of the museum is a blur because we mostly avoided it. Charlotte refused to go in the September 11th room, and she sat outside the exhibit while Maggie and I briskly walked through it, merely glancing left and right. I unexplainably stopped to look at a webcam of a plane hitting a tower in stop motion, but Maggie pulled me away when I began to weep. "We don't want to see that, Mom." She was right; I've seen very little video of that day, and Thursday was not the night to start to look. We glanced at the Timeline, confirming that the announcement announcing "the South Tower is secure" was included, and then we quickly rejoined Charlotte.

I went back to the Museum with a dear friend on Monday. She and I lived and worked in Manhattan for 20 years, and I wanted to look at the collected postcards and other items that honor the WTC with a fellow New Yorker, another gal who used to step up onto the sidewalk from the subway each morning, and spin around until she saw the Twin Towers and then knew which direction to walk.

It's taken me years – almost 13 – to figure out how to walk without Jeff holding my hand. I still shake my head at the senselessness of it all; I cannot figure out how it is that my husband is part of a national tragedy. I cannot fathom how I got from there to here alone, but when I look at my now-teenaged daughters, I know I have walked a long way without him. The girls were babies, and now they are not. I am proud to know he would be so happy with them, and with me, too.

Written by Ellen Bakalian, Ph.D., appeared on NY Observer website, www.observer.com.

ZURICH GLOBAL VOLUNTEER DAY (cont'd)



Picarro. The following year, to honor the memories of the four Zurich employees who perished, Zurich created the KAMP award, named for the initials of the four who perished. The award is given annually to employees who exemplify the highest values of service and compassion. On the evening of October 17, 2014, for the third consecutive year, the 9/11 Tribute Center will be hosting the KAMP award ceremony.

"The spirit of togetherness, determination and resistance in difficult times of the American people and all those involved has rippled halfway across the globe and affected people like me. May God Bless America and everyone else," one of the many visitor cards read.

9/11 MEMORIAL MUSEUM FAMILY ENTRY



Photo by Gary Cirlin

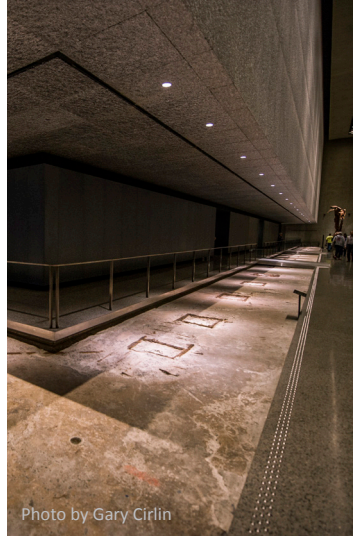


Photo by Gary Cirlin

At the 9/11 Memorial Museum there is a dedicated window for assisting family members. Access to the Museum will always be free for 9/11 family members. Due to capacity constraints in the Museum, all visitors are required to obtain a ticket for entry. Advance reservations are recommended to guarantee your visit on a specific date and time.

Please let the visitor services staff know that you are a family member and they will direct you to the special entry window. A limited number of tickets are available at this window and are subject to availability. To be sure you are able to visit the Museum at your preferred time, reservations are recommended in advance. Family members can bring two complimentary guests. Any additional guests will be charged standard ticket prices.

Family members can reserve Museum tickets by calling this dedicated phone line Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., (212) 266-5201; TTY: (212) 266-5212. Reservations made through this phone line will be available at a dedicated window at the Museum's ticket windows. 9/11 Memorial Museum staff at this number will also provide assistance in planning a visit.

Although family members are strongly encouraged to reserve tickets by phone, requests for tickets can also be sent via email to familyvisits@911memorial.org. Requests should include the date and time of preferred visit, the name of your loved one as it appears on the Memorial, along with your relationship and a phone number at which you can be contacted to confirm the details of your visit.

ANNUAL COMEDY NIGHT FUNDRAISER



9/11 TRIBUTE CENTER PRESENTS WE WERE THERE

The 9/11 Tribute Center's "stories of 9/11 told by those who were there," moves on stage. The Tribute Center, an official partner of the 9/11 Memorial Museum, presents "We Were There," beginning on July 15, a weekly auditorium program at the 9/11 Memorial Museum will feature two different Tribute Center guides who will share their stories. A moderator, also a Tribute guide, sets the historic context for each of the stories and connects the stories to artifacts that visitors will experience in the museum. The thirty-minute program closes with an opportunity for the audience to discuss and reflect on the stories they have just heard.

These short stories are enormously impactful. They transform history from something abstract and distant to something that is close to each listener's experience. A survivor shares a story of descending the staircase to safety; a firefighter who lost all of the men in his company shares his healing process; a 9/11 family member reveals her disbelief when her father does not return home; a first responder describes the challenge of working in recovery and on finding lost friends; the shock of a brother disappearing into thin air. When a community comes together, it is the power of healing that comes through in many of these stories.



The stories being told have been developed by the guides during their Tribute Center walking tours that they give on the 9/11 Memorial. Each story has been edited to be under 7 minutes and the two stories that are paired together are thoughtfully connected.

"These stories are unforgettable and touch your heart," commented one visitor after the program, and another, "The stories made it so real; it felt like 'I was there.'"

Our guides have expressed how meaningful and powerful it has been for them to share their stories and be a part of the historic record of 9/11.

Show your support for the 9/11 Tribute Center!

Join us for our 2nd annual Comedy Night fundraiser, ***Laugh and Make a Difference***, Thursday, July 17, 2014, from 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM at the Broadway Comedy Club, located at 318 West 53rd Street in New York, NY 10019.

Don't miss out on this special evening of laughs, cocktails, raffles and live auction. The show will feature John Larocchia from Laughter Saves Lives and proceeds go to the 9/11 Tribute Center education and docent programs. For general information or details about how to obtain platinum and premium group packages, contact Hillary Charap, hcharap@tributewtc.org.

For tickets, go to tributewtc.org/events/comedy14 and purchase them directly! Get them now before we run out. Limited seating available. We hope to see you there.

September 11th Families' Association
22 Cortlandt Street, Suite 801
New York, NY 10007

DONATIONS IN MEMORIAM

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Matthew C. Sellitto
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Richard James Stadelberger
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Donna Ann Wilson



Photo by Gary Cirlin

DATES TO REMEMBER

Visit www.911families.org and select "Events" for a full list of upcoming events.

9/11 Tribute Center Presents the 2nd Annual Comedy Night

Thursday, July 17, 2014
Broadway Comedy Club
318 West 53rd Street, New York, NY

For tickets, go to
tributewtc.org/events/comedy14

For more details, email
hcharap@tributewtc.org

Eric Evans Memorial Golf Tourney

Monday, July 28, 2014
Club at River Oaks, Sherman, CT
Go to ericevansmemorial.weebly.com for
details, and select Upcoming Events

Brooklyn Wall of Remembrance & Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers FDN Heroes Night

Friday, August 1, 2014
MCU Park, Brooklyn, NY
Call 718-987-1931 for details

Kevin Williams Alumni Baseball Game & Barbeque

Saturday, August 2, 2014
Shoreham-Wading River HS, Shoreham, NY
Email SWRbaseball@gmail.com for details

Bikers for Bini

Sunday, August 24, 2014
Staten Island Mall, Staten Island, NY
Call 718-412-1851 for details

9/11 TRIBUTE CENTER VOLUNTEER TRAINING PROGRAM
August 1st & 2nd | October 17th & 18th

