

# Children of September 11 Newsletter



Fall Issue 2005

## Remember, Honor, Hope

By Maureen A. Brogan, MA, LPC, COS11 Project Manager



These three words have resonated with me since I first saw them on the 9/11 wrist band, which was developed by the young son of

FOS11 Board Member MaryEllen Salamone (pg. 4). The elegant simplicity of this sentiment illustrates what we must be able to pass on to the children in our lives who have been affected by 9/11.

We all will need to remember those that were lost. However, some children were too young to have memories of the loved one who died and they will need help to remember. To remind our children of the good in this world, we need to honor those who offered help. And finally, there is hope. Hope that others will never have to experience the traumatic loss so many people suffered. Hope that we can encourage and nurture our young ones as they travel on their own unique road to recovery.

This issue focuses on remembering, honoring and hoping. Dr. James Lewis, an FOS11 Advisory Board Member, nicely summarizes the need for positive and proactive planning (pg. 2), for memorializing, and a return to optimism. Tips are offered to families to assist in the anticipation of this year's anniversary (pg. 1). You will also find a section on volunteerism and how to keep the giving spirit alive (pg. 2). In addition, there are resources listed for curriculum ideas and suggestions for developing a partnership between parents, teachers and school administrators for addressing the 9/11 commemoration (pg. 3).

Despite years of clinical training and hours of research, the topics for this issue were driven by a nine-year old. Children can lead us and also show us what they need. We must listen and nurture this process. If you have any stories you'd like to share about the children in your life, we'd love to hear from you and may ask for permission to include the materials in future issues.

## Anticipating Anniversary Reactions to Traumatic Events

The National Center for Child Traumatic Stress, [www.NCTSN.org](http://www.NCTSN.org)

*Excerpt:* Whenever something terrifying or tragic has happened, the anniversary will serve as a strong reminder, renewing early reactions and feelings and increasing worries about something similar happening again. As the anniversary of a public tragedy approaches, there may be increased media attention, warnings, rumors, myths, and misconceptions that can easily add to these worries. Here's what you can do:

- Anticipate reminders related to the anniversary and help children recognize and learn to cope with them. A child may not be fully aware of what he or she is remembering and may react with increased distress without knowing how or why the anniversary of 9/11 is triggering those feelings. By understanding children's specific traumatic reminders, adults may be able to help them to react less strongly and cope more successfully.

- Repeated exposure to traumatic images on television may heighten children's anxiety and distress. Try to limit your child's exposure to such scenes. It will be important to make sure that young children understand that what they may see on television is a replay and not another terrorist attack. Consider contacting local television stations to suggest they limit the use of this kind of footage.

- The events of 9/11 were serious, and our responses to the anniversary are legitimate, normal reactions to the seriousness of the original event. If a child's responses (e.g., nightmares, recurrent thoughts or fears) have been getting worse instead of better over time, consider seeking a referral to a trained and qualified mental health professional.

*Continued on pg. 2*

## Inside this Issue:

### Tips For Families on Anticipating Anniversary Reactions to Traumatic Events

The National Center for Child Traumatic Stress pg. 1

### Proactive Planning for the Commemoration

Dr. James Lewis III, Psy. D. pg. 2

### Volunteerism: What YOU Can Do

pg. 2

### Partnering with Your Child's School to Plan for the September 11 Anniversary

By Heidi Arthur, L.M.S.W. pg. 3

### School and Curriculum Resources

pg. 3

### The 9/11 Band Story

pg. 4

The Children of September 11 (COS11) webpage is part of the Families of September 11, Inc. website. COS11 was developed to support the healing process for children affected by trauma. It offers relevant resources and information for parents, caregivers, and advocates of children affected by 9/11.

COS11 provides links to emotional support websites, information on scholarships and camps, websites specifically for children, as well as miscellaneous resources on 9/11 curriculum, school safety, and other 9/11 organizations that provide support to children.

For more information, please visit:  
[www.childrenofseptember11.org](http://www.childrenofseptember11.org)  
[www.familiesofseptember11.org](http://www.familiesofseptember11.org)

## Volunteerism: What YOU Can Do...



FOS11 is a cosponsor of One Day's Pay, which seeks to establish September 11 as a voluntary day of service, charity, and compassion in

tribute to those who gave so much on 9/11.

Since 9/11, many FOS11 members have initiated charitable activities through their communities, churches or civic organizations to support local services, Habitat for Humanity, schools in Afghanistan, and more.

Whether you plan on planting a tree in your school yard or rallying support for a local cause, volunteering can be a wonderful way to heal and be involved in your community.

Here are some resources for more ways to get involved:

[One Day's Pay](http://www.onedayspay.org)  
[www.onedayspay.org](http://www.onedayspay.org)  
Register your activity on this national database.

[Our Voices Together](http://www.ourvoicestogether.org)  
[www.ourvoicestogether.org](http://www.ourvoicestogether.org)  
Add your efforts to those of other 9/11 families doing good around the world.

[Network for Good](http://www.networkforgood.org)  
[www.networkforgood.org](http://www.networkforgood.org)  
Search more than one million charities to make donations or volunteer your time.

[The Salvation Army](http://www.salvationarmyusa.org)  
[www.salvationarmyusa.org](http://www.salvationarmyusa.org)  
Contact your local chapter to donate time, money or goods.

[American Red Cross](http://www.redcross.org)  
[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)  
Visit the website to find your local chapter or call 1-800-HELP-NOW.

For more resources, please visit:  
[www.familiesofseptember11.org](http://www.familiesofseptember11.org)

## Proactive Planning for the Commemoration

Dr. James Lewis III, Psy. D., FOS11 Advisory Board Member

Summer vacation is the time to recover from the long year. It begins by celebrating the end of winter and finishes with preparing for the return to the seriousness of the school year. Children ache for summer activities to last forever as they are free of primary responsibilities and academic obligations.

Parents fret that they really have little idea where and what their kids are "up to" save taxi appointments, requests for monies, sleepovers and groups to join. It is parents who are seemingly organizing the day-to-day activity lists, while they are simultaneously planning for the fall return to school. Parents, being adults, remain more attentive and more concerned if not downright afraid of future events. In a word, they worry.

Children are blessed developmentally to be able to suspend their reality-based assessments of safety and security and enjoy the seeming fantasy of "no worries." What parent hasn't experienced a child waiting until the absolute last minute to begin the school assignment resulting in a late night trip to Kinko's?

The resulting scenario pits the adult planning and preparation for the anniversary of September 11 versus our children's focus on day-to-day needs and activities (sometimes in the emotional effort to avoid the lingering trauma of the anniversary).

Perhaps this is a unique opportunity to build on the strengths of parents and children in our attempts to provide a

positive summer experience for children of Families of September 11. Too often the goal is to reach the objective. We ask the question "How do we prepare for the anniversary?" rather than "How do we get by the anniversary?" Perhaps in the process of planning for summer the goal should be oriented on concrete aspects of life after September 11. For example, what types of activity planning can reinforce the notion of survival and resilience?

Maybe the best we can do as parents is to extend the summer vacation to October by including a significant family activity post-9/11 to counteract the cues of impending memorialization, including the media blitz, request for interviews, and national activities.

Children respond very well to positive and proactive plans. They intuitively recognize that their parents see the future, and upbeat plans lift their spirits and greatly reduce their vulnerabilities to pessimism and despair. Our children need plans that get them past a very tragic day at the end of the summer and the beginning of the more serious work of their lives.

I suspect that after the obligation of any additional task subsides, we as adults and parents will begin to indulge in the future-oriented optimism as well. We all need another celebration to reaffirm our faith in our own safety and our joys despite our sadness and our losses.

---

## Anticipating... *Continued from pg. 1*

- Share any concerns you may have about your children during this period of time with teachers or school personnel so that they can offer additional reassurance and be alert for signs of distress. Most schools will be dealing with the anniversary in one way or another. Talk to your child's teacher and find out what they have planned.

- Be honest with children. It's OK to share your own reactions and concerns. Kids learn by watching their parents. When grown-ups are holding back, they

can usually tell. Some children will ask, "Could it happen again?" It's best to answer such questions as honestly as possible. One approach is to tell children that lots of people are working very hard to make the country and all the people as safe as possible, but that there's no way to absolutely guarantee or promise that there will be no future terrorist attacks.

For the complete article including sections on "What to look for" and "Who might need special support?" please visit: [www.NCTSN.org](http://www.NCTSN.org) or [www.familiesofseptember11.org](http://www.familiesofseptember11.org).

## Partnering with Your Child's School to Plan for the September 11 Anniversary

By Heidi Arthur, L.M.S.W



The September 11 anniversary presents both unique challenges and opportunities for school officials, counselors, and teachers. Sometimes the challenges can seem to overwhelm the opportunities. Even the most talented may feel daunted when confronted with the task of appropriately honoring a profoundly emotional and sensitive tragedy that occurs very soon after the start of the new school year and involves students of different ages, maturity, and personal experience of loss.

You may be feeling similarly overwhelmed with the added struggle to cope with your own personal feelings while also comforting your children as your family plans special private ways to honor and remember your loved ones on or around the anniversary.

Taking the time to share ideas and participate in planning activities with your child's school might be both welcomed by the school and helpful to you and your children.

The anniversary of September 11 in a school community can be a time for students and their teachers to transcend the routine and come together in shared remembrance to promote hopefulness and continued healing. For you and your children, participating in shared community ritual can be valuable, even if participation is limited to simply sharing thoughts and ideas. Connecting with the school around the anniversary not only helps the school, but it can also reinforce for your child that his or her school—the child's community—can also be a place for comfort and healing.

The process of planning for the anniversary can be as valuable as the event or activities themselves, which do not have to occur on 9/11 to be effective. This can allow more time for planning and relieve some of the pressure felt by schools. Even schools that have developed new traditions to honor the anniversary can add in elements developed through a participatory planning process.

If you decide to reach out to the school, contact the principal, your child's teacher, or a counselor, and ask them to:

- Encourage student involvement. Adults tend to plan events that benefit adults.
- Encourage voluntary participation from everyone in the school. Your child's crossing guard, janitor, cafeteria workers, and librarians are important people to the children in the school community. Encourage their input and participation.
- Encourage officials to involve school counselors when plans are discussed, not just to ensure that plans are appropriate and sensitive, but also to facilitate expression and dialogue during the planning process.
- Encourage the use of a "comment box", classroom discussions, and after-school meetings to bring together students, parents, teachers and other staff to generate ideas.

Whether your child's school decides to share a moment of silence, create a memorial garden (or mural or quilt), or promote pro-social activities or volunteerism, honoring the anniversary of a traumatic event can promote healing. Each anniversary of September 11 offers an opportunity to focus on resilience-oriented themes of growth, renewal, and community cohesion, both within your home and within your child's school.

*Heidi Arthur, L.M.S.W was responsible for helping develop 9/11 anniversary recommendations for the New York City Department of Education in 2002 and 2003.*

## Letters to Schools

Every September following 2001, FOS11 has contacted school commissioners and superintendents in Departments of Education across the country to remind them that it is the responsibility of schools, teachers, counselors and other officials to act in the best interests of children, both those who are openly suffering from the effects of 9/11 as well as those who may be suffering in silence. We encourage schools to: support sensitivity training programs to assist teachers and counselors; partner with parents and caregivers in decisions about school curriculum that pertain to 9/11; and limit the exposure of children to violent images of 9/11 in the classroom.

### Curriculum Ideas:

#### Scholastic

NFL, in collaboration with Scholastic and Facing History and Ourselves [www.scholastic.com/oneworld](http://www.scholastic.com/oneworld) *One World: Connecting Communities, Cultures and Classrooms*. Includes lesson plans, turnkey reproducibles, literary excerpts, and strategies for building community and understanding in the post 9/11 era.

#### PBS: America Responds

[www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)  
Classroom resources and lesson plans.

#### Teaching 9-11

[www.teaching9-11.org](http://www.teaching9-11.org)  
Sample lessons plans, syllabi and more.

### School Safety:

#### Keep Schools Safe

[www.keepschoolssafe.org](http://www.keepschoolssafe.org)  
Suggestions on how to deal with many issues related to safety and security in schools.

#### FEMA for Kids

[www.fema.gov/kids](http://www.fema.gov/kids)  
Play games, read stories and become a "Disaster Action Kid!"

For more information, please visit:  
[www.familiesofseptember11.org](http://www.familiesofseptember11.org)



Families of September 11, Inc.  
1560 Broadway, Suite 305  
New York, NY 10036

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit #3  
New York, NY



## The 9/11 Wrist Band Story

John Salamone worked for Cantor Fitzgerald and was killed on September 11, 2001. He left behind his wife, FOS11 Board Member MaryEllen Salamone and three children, ages 6, 4 and 2. Since then, the Salamone children have become big supporters of their mom's advocacy for them as well as all children affected by 9/11. The oldest son, now nine, is an avid collector of the colorful "cause" bracelets. He wanted to make a band to raise awareness about Families of September 11, the organization for which his mom volunteers. He designed the bracelet so that people would "remember those who died, honor all those who helped around the world, and hope that something like 9/11 never happens again."



### REMEMBER HONOR HOPE

Families of September 11 proudly presents the 9/11 band in remembrance, with honor, and in hope of a better future for all our children.

For a donation of \$15.00, you will receive five bracelets. Bracelets are \$3.00/each for any quantity thereafter. You may contact our office at 212-575-1878 or visit our website at [www.familiesofseptember11.org](http://www.familiesofseptember11.org) to print out an order form.

Families of September 11 (FOS11) represents the families and children of victims of the September 11, 2001, attacks as well as survivors and others affected by the events of that day. Through collaborations and partnerships, we champion greater awareness about the effects of public trauma and extended grieving, as well as public policies that improve the prevention of and the response to acts of terrorism. More than 2,100 people have chosen to join our organization.

You can join and receive our monthly e-newsletters and action alerts by calling 212-575-1878 or by visiting our website at [www.familiesofseptember11.org](http://www.familiesofseptember11.org).

This project was supported by a September 11 recovery grant from the American Red Cross Liberty Disaster Relief Fund.

© 2005 Families of September 11, Inc. FAMILIES OF SEPTEMBER 11 and the Flame Design are registered trademarks of Families of September 11, Inc. 9/11 Wrist Band © Joshua Allen Photography Gift of Life image © NG Choon Boon