

# THE CHANGE AGENT

Adult Education for  
Social Justice: News,  
Issues, and Ideas

## Spared on 9/11, A Restaurant Worker Fights for Justice

*Fekkek Mamdouh and Rinku Sen*

At 8 a.m. on September 11, 2001, 40-year-old Fekkek Mamdouh was asleep. He had worked the night before at Windows on the World, the luxury restaurant on the 107th floor of the World Trade Center's North Tower.

Mamdouh's sister called. "Listen, brother, there was a plane that just crashed through the Twin Towers." Mamdouh and his wife, Fatima, turned on the TV. They were shocked by what they saw.

Without eating, Mamdouh left their house. He went to the offices of his union, Local 100 of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE). He and other union members began searching for the restaurant staff that had been working that morning. They visited all the hospitals, but they did not find any restaurant workers. Mamdouh headed to the morgue on First Avenue and 30th Street, and he stayed there until 3 a.m.

*continued on p. 22*



### PEACEFUL TOMORROWS

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**Submissions. Our next issue explores youth in ABE.** See the "Call for Articles" on the back cover. We welcome submissions from teachers and students as well as activists and thinkers from outside the field. For submission guidelines visit <[www.nelrc.org/changeagent](http://www.nelrc.org/changeagent)> or contact us at 617-482-9485 or [changeagent@worlded.org](mailto:changeagent@worlded.org).

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## From the Editors

In the days after September 11th, 2001, several people who had lost members of their families in the attacks wrote public statements against the military response being taken by the United States. These statements appeared in newspaper editorials, letters to the editor, and in comments made on radio and TV.

A small group of these family members met on a peace walk that took place between the Pentagon and the World Trade Center in November and December 2001. In January 2002, four of them traveled to Afghanistan with a group called Global Exchange in order to meet family members who had lost loved ones in the U.S. bombing campaign. The following month, they formed a group called September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows.

Their mission was to seek non-violent responses to terrorism, and to show their support to other people around the world who had been affected by terrorism, violence, and war. They wanted the United States to support human rights, its Constitution, and laws. Members of Peaceful Tomorrows continue to speak out against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Guantanamo prison, and anti-Muslim activities. They support our Constitution and the rule of law and work for peaceful tomorrows for everyone.

*The Change Agent* has been honored to collaborate with September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows in the publication of this issue.

## Meet the Editorial Board



*Standing (left to right): Nancy Lorence, Workers United; Mara Komoska, NYC Department of Education, OACE; Gloria Williams, Peaceful Tomorrows; Elizabeth Gonzalez, We Make the Road New York; Michael Hunter, University Settlement Society of New York; Abigail Ellman, We Make the Road New York; Lester Lambert, BMCC; Anshu Wahi, Tanenbaum; Peter B. Gudaitis and Ken Williams, Peaceful Tomorrows; Winston Lawrence, Literacy Assistance Center. Seated (left to right): Terry Sheehan, New York Public Library; Tina Lee Bagley, New York Public Library; Cynthia Peters, The Change Agent. Not pictured: Terry Greene, Peaceful Tomorrows; Marlee Ickowicz, NYC Mayor's office; Hillary Gardner, CUNY.*

*Thanks to the New York City Office of Adult and Continuing Education for their generous support of this issue of The Change Agent. The views in the magazine represent those of the writers.*

# My Brother “Chelo”

Victor Depeña

My brother, Jose Nicolas Depeña, worked at the World Trade Center. Unfortunately, on the morning of September 11, 2001, he was working on the 106th floor in a restaurant called Windows on the World. He was a salad maker. He was one of the victims of that black morning.

That day changed my life and the lives of everyone in my family. I miss my brother so much. “Chelo” was his nickname. When I was a

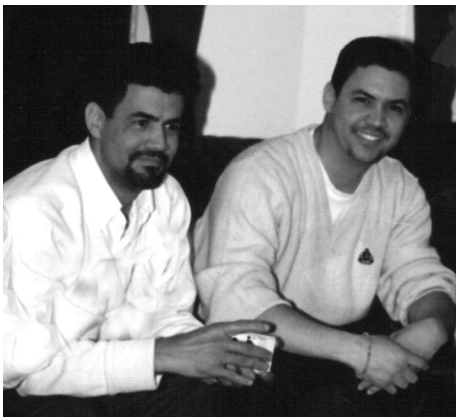
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**He was one of the victims of that black morning.**

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kid, Chelo took me out to the theater. On one special occasion, we went to see the movie “Saturday Night Fever.” Sometimes, he took me to his workplace to teach me how to work. As adults, we were very close. He gave me advice about everything. Chelo was like a father to me. He was my best friend and a most charming brother!

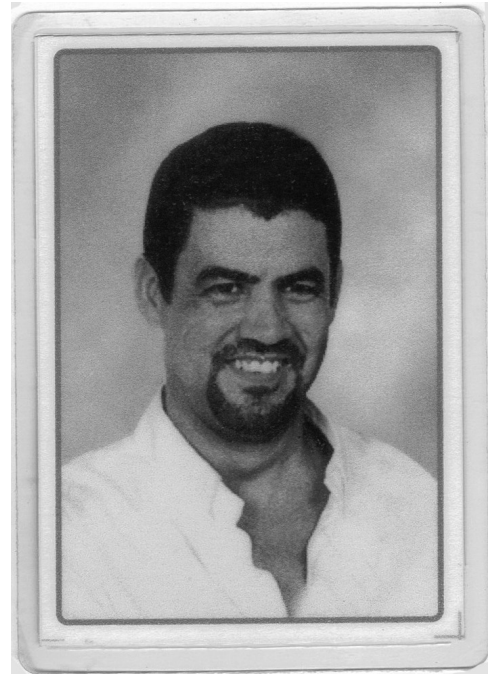
I am not the only one who misses Chelo. He also left a wife and two children. In the Dominican Republic, he was like Saint Nicolas because he was dedicated to helping those in need.



I honor my brother’s memory by writing this. And I go back to the Dominican Republic every summer, and I try to do some of the things that my brother would have done. I think about my brother every day. I try to honor his memory by behaving in a most respectable and friendly way!

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Victor Depeña (in photo with his brother on the left) is from the Dominican Republic. He currently lives in Methuen, MA, with his wife Yulisa and their daughter, Brisa. His goal is to get his GED and go to college, which his wife is currently doing! He attends classes at the Dr. Shirley F. Callan Learning Center.



*“Cuando tenga que dejarte por un corto tiempo, por favor no entristezcas...sino extiende tu mano para confortar y dar ánimo y en cambio yo te confortaré y te tendré cerca de mí.”*

*This excerpt from Chelo’s funeral card translates as: “When I have to leave you for a short time, please don’t be sad...but extend your hand to comfort others and lift them up, and in exchange, I will comfort you and hold you close to me.”*

# 9/11: Who What When Where Why

*Cynthia Peters*

## Pre-Reading

**SHARE WHAT YOU KNOW** about 9-11. What happened that day?

**REVIEW THIS VOCABULARY:** hijack/hijacker; terrorist (see “What is Terrorism?” on pp. 52-53); extremist; suicide; weapons of mass destruction.

## A Deadly Suicide Mission

On September 11, 2001, 19 hijackers boarded four planes. Their plan was to turn these commercial planes, which were filled with fuel, into giant bombs. The hijackers were mostly from Saudi Arabia. They were members of Al Qaeda, a global terrorist organization.

## Flights #11 and #175 Destroy the World Trade Center and Kill Thousands

Two flights departed from Boston. The hijackers on these flights took control of the planes and flew them into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center. Almost 3000 people were killed, including passengers on the flight, people who were at work in the World Trade Center, and others who were on the ground. A short time after the planes hit the



*The Pentagon*

towers, both towers collapsed. Many firefighters and emergency workers lost their lives trying to rescue people from the building.

## Flight #77 Damages the Pentagon and Kills Almost 200

One flight took off from Dulles Airport in Virginia. The hijackers crashed this plane into the Pentagon. Almost 200 people died.

## Flight #93 Crashes in a Field, Killing Everyone on Board

The last hijacked flight to take off on the morning of September 11 departed from New Jersey.



*The World Trade Center*



*A field in Pennsylvania*

The passengers on this flight called their relatives and friends to tell them about the hijacking. They found out that three other planes had been hijacked on the same day and that the hijackers had purposely crashed them into important buildings. The passengers on Flight #93 fought to get control of the aircraft. They succeeded. They prevented the hijackers from crashing the plane into the Capitol Building or the White House, one of which was probably their target. The plane crashed in a field in Pennsylvania; 37 passengers, 7 crew members, and 4 hijackers died. (Read more about Flight 93 on p. 19.)

## Global Outpouring of Sympathy

At the time of 9/11, the United States had not experienced an attack inside its borders since the early 1800s. It was a huge shock for Americans. People all over the country and many parts of the world showed their sympathy to the victims.

## Why Did Al Qaeda Attack the United States?

After these horrifying attacks, many commentators described Al Qaeda as an evil organization that wanted to destroy the U.S. way of life. On September 14, 2001, George Bush said, "Our responsibility to history is already clear. [We must] answer these attacks and rid the world of evil."

## About the Targets

**The World Trade Center** was a pair of skyscrapers in New York City. They held the offices of several large multinational corporations and financial services companies.

**The Pentagon**, located in Arlington, VA, is the headquarters of the U.S. military.

**The Capitol**, in Washington, DC, is where the U.S. Congress meets.

**The White House**, in Washington, DC, is the home of the U.S. president.

Other commentators say that Al Qaeda carried out the 9/11 attacks because of their extreme religious beliefs. They say that these Muslim fundamentalists want their countries to be run by strict Muslim laws and do not want western influence on their society, culture, or political systems.

Some commentators say that the conflict between the United States and Al Qaeda is not as simple as "good" against "evil." Nor can it be understood as a religious conflict. They say that the 9/11 attacks were a military operation carried out against the U.S. because the U.S. has carried out many unfair military operations in the Middle East. Al Qaeda has said it does not want U.S. military bases in its holy land, Saudi Arabia (home of Mecca and Medina, Islam's two holiest cities). Al Qaeda wants the U.S. to stop aiding Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories, and it wants the U.S. to stop supporting corrupt dictators in the Arab and Muslim world.

## What Happened Next?

### War in Afghanistan

George Bush, who was president in 2001, ordered a massive military strike against Afghanistan. He thought Osama bin Laden (the head of Al Qaeda) was hiding there. He also knew that Afghanistan was home to many members of Al Qaeda. To this day, 10 years later, the U.S. military is still in Afghanistan. More than 1600 U.S. troops have died in Afghanistan, over 11,000 troops have been wounded, and thousands of civilian Afghans have died.

### USA PATRIOT Act

To help police fight terrorism at home, the U.S. Congress passed the USA PATRIOT Act in October 2001. (See pp. 44-45 for more on the PATRIOT Act.) This law restricted the freedoms of U.S. citizens and allowed the police to more easily detain people they suspected of being terrorists. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) was established in November 2001 to increase the security of boat, train and, especially, airplane travel.

### Terrorist Bombing in Indonesia

On October 12, 2002, a radical Muslim group exploded bombs in night clubs in Bali, Indonesia, killing 200 and injuring another 200. In November 2002, Osama bin Laden claimed the bombing was in direct retaliation for the U.S. war on terror.

### U.S. Invades Iraq

In 2003, the U.S. Congress voted to invade Iraq—at first because they thought Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. However, the U.S. never found weapons of mass destruction. Later, the U.S. argued that our military should stay in Iraq because Al Qaeda was active there. Today, the U.S. still has thousands of troops in Iraq. More than 4700 U.S. soldiers have died in Iraq, over 32,000 soldiers have been wounded, and more than 100,000 Iraqi civilians have died.

### U.S. Military Budget in Trillions

The cost of our military operation in Afghanistan from 2001 to the present has been approximately \$444 billion. The cost of our operation in Iraq from late 2002 to the present has been approximately \$806 billion. The total for both military operations is \$1.25 trillion. Another \$8 billion has been spent

by the Veterans Administration (VA) to provide health care for returning troops.

### More Bombings—Madrid and London

On March 11, 2004, a terrorist organization inspired by Al Qaeda set off a bomb on a train in Madrid, Spain, killing 190 people and injuring 1800. Some researchers believe that these attacks were a response to Spain joining the war against Iraq.

On July 7, 2005, in London, England, Muslim terrorists set off bombs in the subway and on a bus during rush hour. They killed 50 people and injured 700. In a videotape, one of the bombers explained that he was targeting British civilians because their democratically elected government was responsible for crimes committed in Arab nations. The bomber said he was “protecting and avenging [his] Muslim brothers and sisters.”

### U.S. Kills Bin Laden

In May 2011, after ten years of searching, the U.S. military finally discovered the hiding place of Osama bin Laden. He was living in a mansion in Pakistan. President Obama ordered the military strike that killed Osama bin Laden on May 1.

After the assassination of Osama bin Laden, Al Qaeda promised to retaliate.

**Sources:** <[www.historycommons.org](http://www.historycommons.org)>; <[www.boston.com](http://www.boston.com)> 9/15/05; <[english.aljazeera.net](http://english.aljazeera.net)> 05/2011; <[www.boston.com](http://www.boston.com)> 5/9/11>; <[www.icasualties.org](http://www.icasualties.org)>; <[www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL33110.pdf](http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL33110.pdf)>; <[www.cbc.ca/fifth/warwithoutborders/bombing.html](http://www.cbc.ca/fifth/warwithoutborders/bombing.html)>; <[www.ict.org](http://www.ict.org)>; <[www.csmonitor.com](http://www.csmonitor.com)> 10/4/2001; <[www.theage.com.au](http://www.theage.com.au)> 11/14/02.

*Cynthia Peters is the editor of The Change Agent.*

## Discussion Questions

**Was there** anything in this article that surprised you?

**Test your knowledge.** Fill out “9/11 by the Numbers,” which can be found at <[www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras](http://www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras)>.



# Not in Our Son's Name

## A Plea to the President

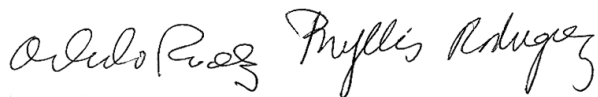
September 15, 2001

Dear President Bush:

Our son is one of the victims of Tuesday's attack on the World Trade Center. We read about your response in the last few days and about the resolutions from both Houses, giving you undefined

power to respond to the terror attacks. Your response to this attack does not make us feel better about our son's death. It makes us feel worse. It makes us feel that our government is using our son's memory as a justification to cause suffering for other sons and parents in other lands. It is not the first time that a person in your position has been given unlimited power and came to regret it. This is not the time for empty gestures to make us feel better. It is not the time to act like bullies. We urge you to think about how our government can develop peaceful, rational solutions to terrorism, solutions that do not sink us to the inhuman level of terrorists.

Sincerely,



Phyllis and Orlando Rodriguez



### Take it Further

**Watch the trailer** to a documentary about Orlando and Phyllis Rodriguez: <[www.inoursonsname.com](http://www.inoursonsname.com)>.

**Find out more** about Phyllis and Orlando Rodriguez and other members of September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows at <[911stories.org](http://911stories.org)>.

**Discuss:** Why did the President's actions make the Rodriguezes feel worse? Can you think of possible "peaceful, rational" solutions?

# So Much Terror, So Many Brave People

Christina Luna

September 11, 2001, was my third day as a freshman at Murry Bergtraum High School. I was so happy that I was going to school in lower Manhattan right across the street from the Brooklyn Bridge. It was such a beautiful day. Even though I was running late, I felt that I was going to have a good day.

When I got out of the subway, I heard a police officer telling me to run. I looked back and saw thick black smoke and flames coming out of the Twin Towers. The first plane had hit. I was in shock. My mind was telling me run but my feet felt stuck to the concrete. I had never felt more

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**My mind was telling me run but my feet felt stuck to the concrete.**

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afraid in my life. I saw teachers telling students to go in the school and then telling them to get out, so I didn't know what to do.

I remembered that my uncle worked as a cashier two blocks away from the school. I didn't know anyone in the school because I was new, so I ran to his job alone. My heart was beating fast from being so scared. I have never felt happier in my life when he opened the door for me. Once I was inside, I called my mother and I could hear in



*View from the Brooklyn Bridge of the Murry Bergtraum High School with the Twin Towers in the background.*



*People trying to get away from the dust and debris of the falling Twin Towers.*

her voice that she was scared. My uncle spoke to my mother and told her we were okay and that I wasn't going anywhere.

The radio was on and the reporter was talking about the plane hitting the first tower. Then he said that another plane had hit the second tower. My heart stopped. I was in disbelief. I saw my uncle go outside and I wanted to go out and see what was going on, but he wouldn't let me. I was glad he kept me inside. He was like a father to me so I knew he was doing it

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**I saw people running down the street. They were covered in white powder from the ash and dust of the burning buildings.**

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*Christina's uncle.*

to protect me. He came in and confirmed that it was true. No one knew what to say. Moments later I saw people running down the street. They were covered in white powder from the ash and dust of the burning buildings. Tears rolled down their faces. I felt as if I were looking at ghosts. I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

The news reported that all trains had been stopped because they believed that it was a terrorist attack. A terrorist attack! I was even more scared when I heard that. Even though I was indoors, the odor from the

burning of the Twin Towers was very strong.

Looking out the window I saw more and more

people trying to get away from the burning buildings. I felt helpless. Some were bleeding, many were crying, and

**I saw people hugging each other and crying into each others' shoulders.**

others were coughing from all the dust in the air. They were helping each other. I saw people hugging each other and crying into each others' shoulders. Some had their arms over others' shoulders to help them walk. Everyone was walking away from the Twin Towers.

The reporter said that they could see people jumping out of windows. They were trying to escape the fire on the inside of the building. It was so sad to hear that people had to make that choice: stay inside a burning building or jump from a skyscraper. We didn't know what to do. All I knew was that I wanted to be home with my family.

When we were able to get in the car, my uncle started driving. But it felt like we were never going to get out of the city. Every bridge was closed to cars because the streets were filled with people walking and we knew there was no way we were getting out of Manhattan by car. We left the car at his step-mother's house and walked to the train to see if they were running. We finally made it to Brooklyn by train. When I saw my mother, I thanked God that I made it home to see her face.

I have never shared so many details about that day until now. I dedicate my thoughts and prayers to all those who lost someone on 9/11. It must be so much harder for them.

*Christina Luna, 25 years old, was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY. She has a beautiful four-year old daughter and a wonderful fiancé. When she finishes school at Brooklyn Adult Learning Center, she plans to attend culinary school and open a pastry shop.*



*Christina in 2001, age 15.*



*Christina, ten years later*

## Write About It!

**Writing helps** make sense of experience. Look on <[www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras](http://www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras)> for an ESOL lesson plan related to writing about 9/11, by Elizabeth Gonzalez of We Make the Road New York.

**"I kept waking up** in the middle of the night," writes Olivia Melendez of the Adult Learning Center in Mid-Manhattan, as she remembers the aftermath of 9/11. Read her full essay at <[www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras](http://www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras)>.

# Time Froze

*Rosa Kourani*

I was eight months pregnant when 9/11 happened. My husband is Arabic and was working on 26<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan where he owns a business.

I saw the attacks on TV. At first, I thought it was a movie, but slowly I realized it was real. I waited for my husband's call. Time froze and the silence was very loud. After many hours, my husband was able to contact me. I was so relieved to hear that he was okay.

Twelve days after the attack, I had my child, but I lived in fear. People treated my husband with disrespect because of his Arab ethnicity. I worried every day when he left the house in the morning to go to work. I worried that he might not come home to us. Everything about my world changed.

Yet, I knew I had to make extra efforts to be well for my family. At that time, I was in the process of becoming a citizen. This involved a tremendous amount of focus on my part. My husband was trying to become a citizen as well, and I was able to help him. So, out of this terrible act came a great sense of urgency to achieve our goals. My child was a real blessing too. I feel more confident these days, as a citizen, mother, wife, and ESL student. I'm grateful for my life and my beautiful family.



*Rosa Kourani is a student at We Make the Road New York.*

## What About You?

**Have you** ever felt that "time froze"? What was it like?

**Have you** experienced or witnessed anti-Arab discrimination? If so, describe it.

**Rosa claims** four identities. List them below in the left column. In the right column, list some of your identities.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

# Crossing the Border After 9/11

Abukar

The few people who committed the horrible terrorist acts on 9-11 called themselves Muslims, but what they did was un-Islamic. In fact, the Qur'an says that if you kill one person, you kill all humanity. But if you save one person, you save all humanity.

The terrorists brought harm to all the Muslim communities. For example, last year, I went to the U.S. to visit my sister. On the Canada/U.S. border, the security stopped us because we have a Muslim name. They held us for four hours. They checked the car; they fingerprinted us, and took our pictures.

It was a horrible moment, and I felt helpless. Even though the security guards at the U.S. borders have our fingerprints, names, and pictures, they still stop us with the same routine every time we visit the U.S. For now, I have decided not to visit my sister anymore because I hate the humiliation.



Abukar (who prefers not to use his last name) lives in Toronto, Canada, and takes classes at George Brown College.

## The Golden Rule in Six Different Religions

**The Qur'an** (also spelled Koran) is the sacred book of Islam. Share what you know about it and what you know about Islam.

**Match the quotes on the left with the religion on the right.**

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. This is the sum of duty: do naught unto others which would cause you pain if done to you.                             | Native American |
| 2. In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.                    | Buddhism        |
| 3. Respect for all life is the foundation.   | Hinduism        |
| 4. What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor: that is the whole of the Torah; all the rest of it is commentary. | Judaism         |
| 5. Hurt not others in ways you yourself would find hurtful.  | Islam           |
| 6. Not one of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.                                | Christianity    |

**Source:** <[www.tanenbaum.org](http://www.tanenbaum.org)>. See their site for lesson plans and ideas about teaching religion.  
Answers: 1: Hinduism; 2: Christianity; 3: Native Amer.; 4: Judaism; 5: Buddhism; 6: Islam.

# How I Was Affected by 9-11

*Missouri Students Share Their Experiences*



*Scott McConnell wonders why.*

## Why?

Since 9/11, I have wondered why the terrorists hated us so much. What have we done to them? It turns out U.S. policy in that region has some problems. Back in the 1980s, the U.S. supported Osama bin Laden and the Taliban because they were fighting the Russians in Afghanistan. But we shouldn't have supported the Taliban for any reason. Then, during the first Gulf War, the U.S. did a lot of damage in the area and set up military bases in Saudi Arabia, which is a holy place for Muslims. There is no excuse for

the attacks on 9/11. But we could try to understand the history and take responsibility for what we've done.

## Shock and Fear

I could not believe it happened here. I was in shock. I was very sad for all the families of the people whose lives were lost. 9/11 made me very judgmental of Muslims. They make me nervous. I don't like feeling that way towards people.



*Cindy Mortensen felt shock and fear.*



*Pamela Van Zee's brother went to war.*

## War

Because of 9/11, my baby brother was sent to Iraq. He was due to retire, but his retirement was cancelled. He was away from home for another 28 months. We were very concerned about his safety. We were constantly monitoring the news. It was a stressful time in our family.

## Background Checks

Since 9/11, it has been harder to get a job than before 9/11. Employers are doing more background checks.



*Anna Valencia noticed that it was harder to find a job.*

## My Uncle was a Firefighter

My Uncle Jeff was hurt on 9/11. He worked for the New York Fire Department and of course they were the first ones called on the job. My mom told me, "Uncle Jeff is in the hospital with a broken leg, collar bone, and bruised ribs." Thank God he was okay, but ever since then, my Uncle Jeff just isn't the same.



*Allyssa Costello's uncle was hurt on 9/11. Above: clothing worn on 9/11 is on display at the Tribute World Trade Center visitor center.*



*Matt Woodall regrets the loss of freedom.*

## Fewer Freedoms

9/11 created an excuse for the U.S. government to invade our privacy. For example, Congress passed the USA Patriot Act. The Patriot Act allows the government to monitor and videotape you without your knowledge. Police can come into your house without a search warrant. It is truly gut-wrenching to know that because of this tragic event my children will never see the same freedoms I have. I wonder if our Government took advantage of this tragic terror attack on American soil to gain more control over "we the people."

## More Empathy

9/11 gave me an idea of how people in other countries feel. It's true we were attacked on 9/11. But now people in Afghanistan and Iraq have been living with war for years. That is a lot of torment. They bleed just like we bleed. They mourn just like we mourn. I know about mourning. My cousin was killed in Afghanistan. He was trying to protect us from people who mean us harm. The brutal dictator Saddam Hussein of Iraq has been brought to justice. The leader of Al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, has been killed. It has been almost 10 full years of war. We need to bring our troops home to their families. In war, everyone gets hurt.



*Angela Hurd became more empathetic.*

*Writers are members of a GED class at Maplewood Adult Education program in Kansas City, MO.*

# Memoirs of Afghanistan

Rita Lasar

*Rita Lasar's brother, Abe Zelmanowitz, was killed in the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. She visited Afghanistan in January 2002, four months after the U.S. invasion, to meet with innocent families affected by the bombing.*

## The Reality of War

As my plane approached the capital of Afghanistan, it seemed to me that I was landing on the surface of the moon. There appeared to be nothing but rubble and light brown dust as far as the eye could see. I did not believe that it was possible to feel more sadness and disorientation than I had been experiencing since my brother perished in the World Trade Center on September 11th. But in Afghanistan, I experienced the same shock as I had on that fateful day.

The drive to the city revealed more destruction and devastation than this privileged American had ever imagined. This was the reality of war.

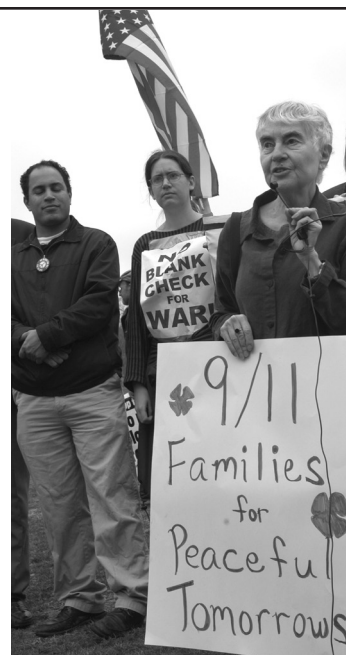
## Witness

On the way to the city, our guide pointed to a collapsed building. He told me that it had been a mosque recently bombed by my country. I asked if we could stop the car. There before me was a sight

identical, except in size, to what I had seen at Ground Zero (the site where the World Trade Center stood) a few days earlier. The metal frame of the mosque was sticking out of the structure at the exact angle as the metal frame of the North Tower of the World Trade Center, the building my brother had died in.

It was then that I fully understood why I had chosen to make this journey. I was to be a witness to the sorrow, horror, and suffering of the innocent people who were being made to pay for the September 11th attacks.

We visited the Aschiana Streetchildren's Center, a humanitarian agency that took children off the streets, fed them a daily meal, and taught them arts and crafts so that they would not have to beg. The children were so beautiful and so sad. But they were also children, and so they laughed,



*Rita Lasar participating in civil disobedience.*



*The food packets (left) are the same bright yellow color as the cluster bombs (right).*



*Rita visits the Shaher family in Kabul on January 15, 2002. Their home was destroyed by a U.S. bomb and a woman, six months pregnant, was severely wounded.*

and sang, and gathered around to watch and to hear these strange Americans. After we had been there a few days, we were recognized wherever we went, and the children would call out to us, "Hello, how are you? We love you."

### Bombs Kill Innocent People

U.S. forces had dropped many cluster bombs in the military campaign in Afghanistan. Each contained 202 "bomblets" which explode separately. Up to 30% of the bomblets did not explode on impact, so they remained a danger to the population.

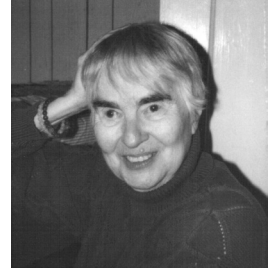
The bomblets were even more dangerous because they looked like the food packets that the U.S. had also dropped from the skies. Those running to get the food would sometimes be maimed or killed when they picked up a bomblet by mistake. A doctor told us that his hospital treated at least ten children a day who were harmed by the bomblets.

I met the brothers of a young man who had been asleep with his recent bride in their bed when a bomb came through the window and killed them both. They told me about their brother: "He was an artist and a poet and had married a young woman very much like him." We sat on a carpet on the floor, drinking tea, and eating nuts and raisins brought by their sister, who handed me an

embroidered parrot that her brother had made. She said how sorry she was for my brother, and we embraced and cried together.

My trip to Afghanistan changed my life. Never will I be able to turn my eyes or back away from the innocent victims of governments unable to resolve conflict through means other than bombs: bombs that kill innocent people, just like my brother Avrame.

*Rita Lasar is a member of September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows. This article was excerpted from September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows: Turning Our Grief Into Action for Peace.*



## Letter to the New York Times

September 17, 2001

To the Editor:

My brother, Abe Zelmanowitz, was on the 27th floor of 1 World Trade Center when the first plane hit. Although he could have gotten out of the building, he chose instead to stay with his friend, a quadriplegic who could not get out. President Bush mentioned his heroism in his speech at the National Cathedral on Friday.

It is in my brother's name and mine that I pray that we, this country that has been so deeply hurt, not do something that will unleash forces we will not have the power to call back.

— Rita Lasar



*On March 17, 2003, Rita Lasar was arrested, along with many others, in front of the Capitol building in Washington, DC. They were protesting the Iraq War, which started two days later.*

# 9/11 Changed My Attitude about Life

Wen Fei Liang

It was an ordinary morning for me. I brushed my teeth and washed my face. Then I turned on a radio and I did some exercises for my upper arms. I made breakfast for my mother and me. After I finished breakfast, I drove my power wheelchair to school. On the way to school, I felt the crisp air fill my lungs. A few white clouds floated in the blue sky. The sun was bright. I felt very comfortable. I said to myself, "It is a wonderful day, isn't it?" However, I did not know that a terrible thing was about to happen and that it would affect many people in the world.

After the terrorists attacked the World Trade Center, our English class was dismissed. I went home as quickly as I could. I was thinking about

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**The sun was bright. I felt very comfortable. I said to myself, "It is a wonderful day, isn't it?"**

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my mother who was old and alone at home. I heard fire trucks. Their sirens blew the silence out of the air. When I arrived at my home, I saw two police

standing in front of the building. We were not allowed into the building. The police said that the terrorists might attack other tall buildings in Chinatown. We were permitted to go into our homes at 3 p.m. I had been on the street for about six hours. I was so worried about my mother. Finally, I saw her. She was well, and we were happy to see each other. Then I watched the news on the television. I felt sad because people's lives were not secure. I felt that there were no safe places in the world. Suddenly, terrorists can kill thousands of innocent people.

Many people were affected by 9/11. They had trouble sleeping at night. They woke up from nightmares. They needed to see psychiatrists. Suddenly, everyone was a suspect. The police set

up many barriers to check the pedestrians. Trucks were not allowed south of Canal Street. Some streets were sealed by the police. The prosperous Chinatown changed. Many garment factories and restaurants closed or moved to New Jersey.

Since 9/11, my attitude about life has changed. I realized the fragility of life and that I should cherish

every moment of it. I am a happy person in the world. I should be satisfied with what I have. I should not complain about why I don't have healthy legs. 9/11 taught me that we should be more concerned for each other.

Before 9/11, I didn't pay attention to my neighbors. They were Chinese seniors who did not speak English. After 9/11, I realized I wanted to help them. So I became their interpreter when they needed me. I read letters to them. I helped them resolve their issues with their telephone bill and cable bill. I was happy to help elderly people because I could see their smiling faces.

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**I realized the fragility of life and that I should cherish every moment of it.**

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Wen Fei Liang is an ESOL student from China who takes classes at University Settlement in New York City. She has been living in New York since 1991 and started studying English a few years ago. Wen Fei developed polio which caused her to walk with difficulty. Her parents always gave her the encouragement she needed to help her get through the difficulties in life.



# It's Time to Wake Up

*Carlos Rivera*

When the World Trade Center went down I was scared. I was working in an office in Manhattan. At the window I saw the buildings burning. I saw fire and smoke. I could not believe what was happening. I never saw that many people die before.

I called my mom in Puerto Rico so we could pray for the people that died and their families. It woke me up. Life is too short. I was thinking about my life and I thought, "It's time to change, time to go back to school to improve my reading and writing. I have will power."

It was then that I stopped drinking, smoking, and partying. It's going to be ten years since I stopped drinking.

I let my tears down that day. It was the scariest day of my life. I will never forget that day for the rest of my life. God bless us all.

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*Carlos Rivera takes classes at the New York Public Library.*

Describe an event that woke you up.	What did you change?

# True Heroes

*Yuk Yee Chan Fung*

Ten years have passed since the attacks of 9/11. We cannot forget the pain of that day, but we are wishing for a peaceful and beautiful tomorrow. So let us remember that people showed courage on that day. Their stories show that human beings' real nature can be kind and generous.

## He Died Helping Others

Some people devoted themselves to saving other people's lives after the disaster. For example, Welles Growther, 24, carried injured people down the stairs of the World Trade Center and returned to help others. He found Judy Wein on the 78th floor. She had a broken arm, a broken rib, and a punctured lung. She could not find the stairs due to all the smoke and debris. But Welles Growther helped her get out of the building. He was an "incredible hero, running back and forth and saving the day," recalled Judy Wein, "If he hadn't come back, I wouldn't have made it."

## They Worked Night and Day

When the planes hit, many emergency workers were going home from their night shift. One of them, Mr. Strauss, was on the subway when he learned about the attacks. "We didn't need to be called back. We knew where we needed to be," he said. He joined hundreds of off-duty emergency personnel who flocked to the site and worked nonstop for days and nights, trying to find survivors. Many people who had witnessed the disaster

joined the emergency workers.

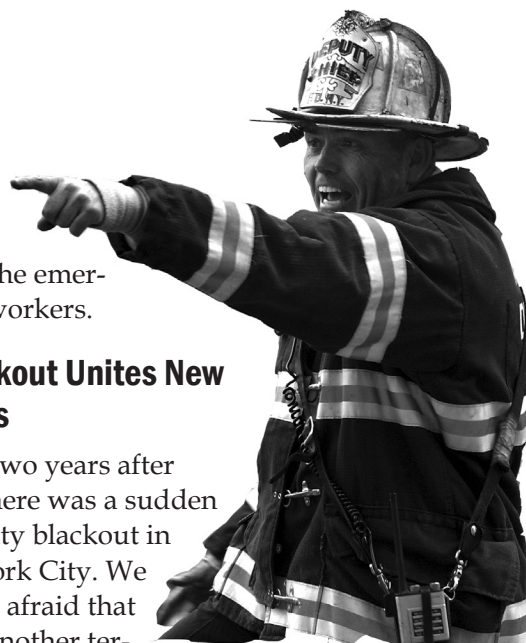
## A Blackout Unites New Yorkers

About two years after 9/11, there was a sudden electricity blackout in New York City. We were so afraid that it was another terrorist attack. We were picturing planes crashing into buildings. We remembered the horror of 9/11. But we also remembered how to help others. All day and night, people helped strangers when they were walking home. Some of them lived too far from home and had to sleep on the streets in the dark. People lit candles and gave water and food to the "homeless." We could see how 9/11 had taught us to be united and to help one another in a difficult time.

## Learning from Our Heroes

Ten years could not wash away the sheer panic of the people who lost their loved ones and the ordeal that we experienced on 9/11. We cannot rewrite history. But we can learn from the stories of ordinary people being heroes. I believe we can find a way to solve the conflicts between countries, races, and religions. We want our troops back home. We should stop destroying lives around the world. It is time for us to think of how to make our planet healthier and allow future generations to live in a warm and beautiful world with love.

*Yuk Yee Chan Fung is a student at Workers United Education Program in New York City.*



## Who Are Your Heroes?

**Find more student essays** (written by students from the Borough of Manhattan Community College) about the ordinary heroes in their lives, and try writing about the heroes in your life!



# Heroes on Flight 93

JianHang Xiao



*"Our Nation will eternally honor the heroes of Flight 93."*

One of the hijackers said he had a bomb.

I can imagine the intimidated eyes and grieving faces of all the passengers and flight attendants.

**They realized that the only way to survive was to resist.**

They called relatives and friends to tell them what was happening. They found out that other planes had been hijacked and crashed into the World Trade Center. They realized the hijackers would probably crash their plane into a building as well. They realized that the only way to survive was to resist.



*Benches at Shanksville carved by the children of the Spring Valley Bruderhof School to honor Flight 93 passengers and crew. They also created a nearby "Peace Barn."*

I am touched by the bravery of the passengers on Flight 93, one of the planes hijacked on September 11, 2001. It is the only plane that did not reach its target.

The terrorists used knives to stab passengers and get control of the plane.

They used all kinds of items to fight back. They used cutlery, carts, wine bottles, scalding water, and fire extinguishers to beat the terrorists. The passengers fought valiantly to overcome the hijackers. But they could not control the plane. The plane crashed in a field in Pennsylvania. Everyone on the plane was killed.

Even though the plane crashed, I was deeply moved by the passengers uniting together to fight the terrorists. The intended target of the plane was either the Capitol Building or the White House. Both of those buildings are important political structures for the country. The Capitol Building is the meeting place for lawmakers. The White House is the place where the president and his family live. Can you imagine if the hijacked plane had crashed into one of those buildings?

The passengers learned that their flight had been turned into an attack weapon. They took a chance and tried to stop it. They sacrificed their own lives so that the terrorists could not succeed in their goal. They are heroes.

JianHang Xiao was born in 1989 and raised in China. He has lived in New York City since 2010. He is currently a student in the CUNY Language Immersion Program (CLIP) at New York City College of Technology where he studied the events of 9/11 and watched the film, "Flight 93," directed by Paul Greengrass.



# Driving into Disaster

## A Train Operator Helps 800 Passengers to Safety

*Kevin Harrington*

I was a train operator on the Lexington Avenue line the day the Twin Towers fell. I had set out that day from Brooklyn with about 800 passengers in my 10-car train and headed north until a terrorist act stopped my uptown trip.

### Emergency Under Ground

As the first cars of my train entered the Fulton Street train station, I heard a powerful blow of air rushing towards my train. That wind was caused

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**I heard a powerful blow of air rushing towards my train.**

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by one of the falling World Trade Center Towers. A few seconds later, all the signals turned red causing the train to come to an emergency stop, and the tunnel quickly began to fill with an ocean of dust.

At that time all I knew was that a plane had crashed into the Twin Towers. I was totally unaware of the devastation taking place in the street above the subway.

When I saw smoke filtering into the under-



*People crossing a bridge out of Manhattan with the Twin Towers burning in the background.*



ground station I went to the policeman on the station platform asking him if I could evacuate my passengers out of the Fulton Street station to the ground above. The policeman told me that the station was closed as it was too close to the World Trade Center.

### Backing Away from Danger

With smoke and debris quickly filling the station, I began to activate emergency procedures. I turned off the air comfort system and the fans, closed all the doors and urged all the passengers to move to the rear of the train where

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**Some of the passengers began to panic but the other passengers reassured them that all would be well.**

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there was less smoke. I got on the public address system and explained to them what was going on and what we were going to do.

A supervisor and I agreed to move the train back to the previous Wall Street Station. I began to walk back through the train to the other end reassuring the passengers as I went. The tunnel was filling with white smoke and dust, but I finally got

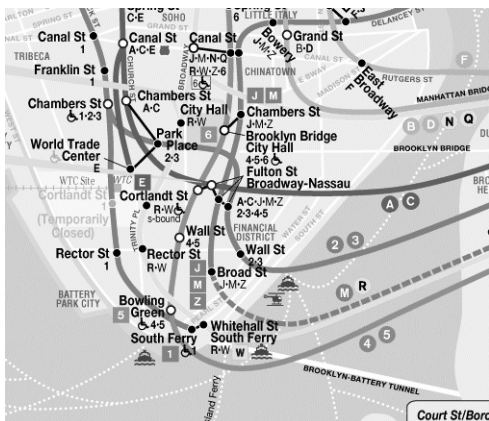
to the other end of the train where another set of controls would allow me to move the train into the previous station a few blocks farther away from the World Trade Center.

Some of the passengers began to panic but the other passengers reassured them that all would be well. I moved the train backwards 50 feet at a

time. We could not move more than 50 feet at a time because the electrical failure caused the emergency brake to come on. Each time the brakes came on, they made a loud shrieking noise. Meanwhile,

**The streets were strewn with dust and personal items from people's desks. We saw framed photos, papers with corporate letterheads, and brief cases.**

visibility was zero due to all the smoke and dust. I recharged the train's brake system about ten times before the train's first car was in the Wall Street Station. The repeated shrieking of the brakes and the poor visibility caused great trepidation amongst the passengers. With a single car adjacent to the Wall Street platform, I manually opened the doors in that car and began to evacuate the passengers onto the platform and up the stairs to the surface.



This map of the New York City subway system shows the stops in lower Manhattan.

## Fortunate to Survive

After clearing the train of all its passengers, I went upstairs where an ambulance driver told me the first tower had fallen, as he spoke the second tower began to fall and his radio squawked with voices and screams. A Kantor-Fitzgerald\* employee's bag fell in front of us. Some of my passengers were directed to take shelter in a nearby building or to leave Manhattan via the Brooklyn Bridge. I stayed in the area after the building fell and directed passengers and passersby to leave Manhattan.

Hours later, my conductor and I finally left the area. We walked uptown toward our homes. The streets of New York's financial district were strewn with several inches of dust and personal items from people's desks and work places. We saw framed

photos, papers with corporate letterheads, and brief cases. The dark streets were filled with po-

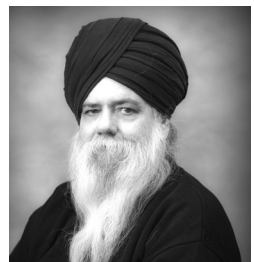
**Passengers from that fateful day sometimes thank me and give me a hug.**

lice, firefighters, and other emergency personnel. Even then, we did not comprehend the extent of the devastation. We knew that many people were dead and that two airliners crashing into the towers could not be an accident.

We were relieved that we got all our passengers off safely and the subway system lost no one that day. Later, when things began to return to normal, passengers from that fateful day would see me and thank me and sometimes give me a hug. They, like me, were fortunate to survive.

*\*Kantor-Fitzgerald was a firm that had offices in the World Trade Center.*

Kevin Harrington is 59 years old and has worked for the New York City Transit Authority since 1981. He is a third generation Transit worker. His ancestors came from Ireland. He is Sikh by faith. Currently, he is the Vice President of the Transport Workers Union Rapid Transit Operations Department.



*continued from the front cover*



*Mamdouh in New York City. Photo by Brian Palmer.*

For the next five days Mamdouh ate and slept very little. He spent many hours in the morgue's lobby carrying a sign: "If you know anyone who worked at Windows or if you worked at Windows, please call the union." Finally, on September 12th, Mamdouh found Mario Peña, who worked behind the bar at Windows on the World. And then, a week later, he found cashier Faheema Nasar. But in the end, 73 of his co-workers died in the terrorist attacks of 9/11. (See pp. 4-6 for background information on the events of 9/11.)

A couple of days after the attack, Mamdouh and Fatima went to the grocery store. She had covered her head in *hijab*.<sup>\*</sup> The store was not crowded. They were the only people wanting to buy fish. But Fatima could not get the fishmonger's attention. Eventually, Mamdouh said to the fishmonger, "Hey, she's trying to talk to you."

The fishmonger said, "Don't you know what you guys did?"

"What?" asked Mamdouh.

"The World Trade Center," replied the fishmonger.

Mamdouh felt very angry. He said: "What are you talking about? I lost 73 of my friends there." The clerk backed up from the counter while Mamdouh yelled, "I want to see the manager!" The manager apologized. Neither Mamdouh nor Fatima would ever return to that store.

Something changed for Mamdouh that day.

<sup>\*</sup>*Hijab refers to the head covering that Muslim women sometimes wear.*



*Mamdouh helped start the Restaurant Opportunity Center after the restaurant he worked at was obliterated in the attacks of 9/11.*

He suffered for the loss of his colleagues. And he was shocked that someone would associate him with their deaths because he was Muslim. Mamdouh had been a lucky immigrant. He had good jobs that paid well. He had not noticed too much discrimination. But after 9/11, he noticed that some people were blaming all Muslims for the actions of a few Muslims. He decided to join with others to help restaurant workers and immigrant workers who were suffering from discrimination. (Read more about his work on p. 23.)

*Fekak Mamdouh is from Morocco. He is married, has three children, and works with the Restaurant Opportunities Center <[www.rocunited.org](http://www.rocunited.org)>. Rinku Sen is the President of the Applied Research Center (ARC) and Publisher of Colorlines.com. This article was excerpted (and adapted) from An Accidental American.*



*Mamdouh and Rinku Sen at a book signing.*

# Ten Years Later

## Still Fighting for a Better Life

*Fekkak Mamdouh*

I lost 73 of my brothers and sisters on 9-11. Just after 9/11, we got together and tried to create something that would help us move on from the grief and the death. We created the Restaurant Opportunities Center (ROC). More than 250 Windows workers lost their jobs and thousands of other restaurant workers were affected by 9/11. ROC unites all of us who work in restaurants. We fight for good jobs and a better life. In our struggle, we remember our brothers and sisters from Windows on the World that we lost. Here are some of the things we have done:

- After 9/11, the owner of Windows on the World opened a new restaurant. He did not want to hire former Windows staff because he was afraid we would form a union. We protested and we pressured him to hire 32 former Windows workers at his new restaurant, Noche.
- We offered English classes to families of World Trade Center victims and helped them get citizenship.



*In the photos on this page, ROC members rally for justice.*

- We opened a cooperatively-owned restaurant called Colors. It serves as a model of worker empowerment in the industry.
- ROC helped undocumented workers win back wages. These workers were afraid to fight for their wages because they are undocumented. It is illegal to withhold wages, whether the employee is documented or not. We helped win \$200,000 in back wages for five undocumented immigrant workers at a Brooklyn deli.
- We have won \$5,000,000 and improvements in workplace policies for restaurant workers.
- We have trained more than 1000 restaurant workers to find good jobs and advance within the industry.
- We have conducted studies that reveal how discrimination works in the restaurant industry, and we work in eight states to fight this discrimination.

Ten years after the tragedy of 9/11, I have the opportunity to be involved in work that is changing people's lives. ROC is a growing national organization with 7500 members in eight states. Our members are Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and atheist. We have a lot of love among us.

**Sources:** <labornotes.org>; and transcribed from GRITtv.



# An American Hero

## An Interview with Talat Hamdani

Tina Lee

Talat Hamdani is the mother of Salman Hamdani, an emergency medical technician and cadet with the New York Police Department who died on 9/11, while trying to rescue his fellow Americans.

Salman Hamdani was working as a lab technician at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. It is believed that on September 11, he was en route to his job in Manhattan when he saw the burning towers, abandoned his commute, and rushed to the World Trade Center to offer his services as a paramedic. His subsequent disappearance led to rumors that he had been involved in the attacks, solely because he was a Muslim. Salman Hamdani's remains were discovered near the north tower and his name was finally cleared in March 2002. He was declared a hero posthumously.

Talat Hamdani is a member of September 11<sup>th</sup> Families for Peaceful Tomorrows. She was one of the 9/11 family members who met privately with President Obama during his visit to Ground Zero on May 5, 2011. Peaceful Tomorrows released a statement at the time to Obama urging the President to pursue a path to peace, to close the U.S.

military prison housing at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, and to bring home U.S. troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

**Could you tell us why you decided to join September 11<sup>th</sup> Families for Peaceful Tomorrows?**

I found a whole group of people who shared my pain. But the most important factor that at-

tracted me was the mission of non-violence.

**Sometimes I wonder if there is a natural desire for revenge when someone you love is taken from you. How do you not succumb to that?**

I am not a revengeful person. I was raised by my grandmother. Every time I got angry, she told me, "Pray to God and say, 'Please, God, guide them to the path of justice.'" I tried to teach this message to my children. The members of Peaceful Tomorrows have the same perspective on life that I do.

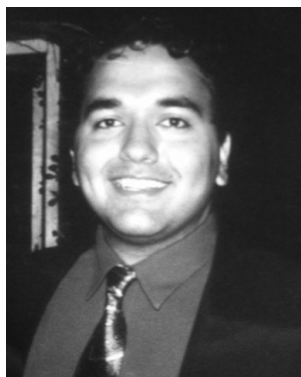
After losing my child, after having suffered such *tremendous* pain—and it was such a tremendous pain when I think about those days—I really am grateful to my God that He has pulled me out of that depression. I cannot even imagine inflicting that kind of pain on my worst enemy!

**It sounds like you have relied on your faith.**

During the summer of 2001, I had finished reading the Qu'ran in English. It took me two years. In moments of intense grief, I would pick up the Qu'ran and read the passages about death. And that gave me comfort: everybody has to die.

**So in your darkest moments, it gave you at least a little bit of support.**

A lot of support. My family was there, my friends were there, but in those moments of solitude, it was the Qur'an that I would read. Then I started reading the Qu'ran from the perspective of being a *human being*, not only a Muslim. And I realized that the Qu'ran addresses and values everybody.



Salman (in photos on this page and with his parents on the next page).

Many people do not know Islam, so we need to educate them. Many Americans were introduced to this faith in a very violent fashion. After the 10th anniversary of 9/11, I'm going to start talking on campuses and at libraries about what Islam really is.

**After 9/11, a lot of Muslim-Americans and Americans who were perceived as Muslim came under suspicion. Your son was honored as an American hero. What do you think makes someone an American?**

An American person is someone who is hard-working. Someone with tolerance towards other faiths and races, because we are a people of all different origins and nationalities. Someone who gives top priority to the law of the land. As an American, you have to stand by your nation; you have to be committed to standing up for your morals and values: freedom, liberty, and justice not only for yourself but more so for others. That's what it means to me. A person of good moral values who does not interfere in other people's business and has mutual respect for others.

**Could you tell us a little bit about your meeting with President Obama on May 5, 2011?**

Sure. I was very anxious the night before. What will he ask? What should I say? I was very tense. I went there with my son. President Obama went to the microphone and he said, "We have brought Bin Laden to justice. And when we told you we have not forgotten you, we meant every word of

the sentence. And we have not forgotten you. And this celebration is about the resiliency of you people" — which is so true. I can understand that because now, ten years later, my two sons and I, thank God, we have come back and we



are contributing members of society. And we are happy now.

And then President Obama came to our table and extended his hand out. I said, in Arabic, "A'salaam alaikum," which means "Peace be upon you," and he said, "Wa'alaikum asalaam," which means, "And upon you be peace." I knew he knew how to respond. Otherwise, I wouldn't have said it.

Then he asked me, "Who did you lose?" and I said, "My son." I was wearing his pin. And he said, "Tell me about him." So I told him, Salman was a very kind and compassionate young man, very humble. He wanted to become a medical doctor. He was a Star Wars fan; his license plate was "Yung Jedi." For him, it was an honor to live and work under the American flag. I said to the President, "I can't believe that I'm here. Salman would really be happy to see his mom talking to the President. He was such a proud American."

It was a big statement that my President and, through him, my nation, is standing with me now, finally, after ten years.

**What's next for you?**

I see we now need to look to the future, usher in a new era of peace, and get out of revenge and violence. We need to restore our rule of law, close

down Guantanamo, and I hope the anti-Muslim sentiment that has overtaken our country comes to an end. We are one nation and we need to come together and move forward in unity.



*Talat (right) with Ruth Chu, from the Asian American Pacific Island Caucus. They participated on a panel about civil liberties post 9/11.*

*Talat Hamdani has set up the Salman Hamdani Memorial Scholarship for students of Pakistani descent. Tina Lee is an adult literacy/ESOL tutor at the Seward Park Library's Center for Reading and Writing. She has lived in New York for 14 years.*

# Examining Memorials

Hillary Gardner

**PRE-READING:** Discuss *spontaneous* memorials that you have seen. Compare them to *official* memorials.

## Ghost Bikes

Near the Brooklyn playground where my son likes to play, there is a bicycle chained to a street sign.

It is decorated with fake flowers and the name of a bike accident victim.



Every time I take my son to the park, I am confronted with this “ghost bike,” just one example of how memorials fill our daily lives.

## Public Remembering

The dictionary explains: “A memorial is an object which serves as a focus for memory of something, usually a person (who has died) or an event.” Memorials can be large or small, sanctioned by government agencies or, like the ghost bike, a controversial effort started by concerned citizens. Maybe you have noticed examples of memorials in your community.

It has been ten years and the National September 11 Memorial and Museum will finally be dedicated this year. But immediately following the attacks in 2001, a spontaneous memorial grew

## I’ll never forget the missing persons flyers plastered in Union Square.

lies longed to learn something more about them greeted me as I exited the subway. These flyers

in Union Square. I’ll never forget the missing persons flyers plastered in the Square. (See the photo on the next page.) Every day for nine days, images of people whose fami-

were the families’ last attempt to make contact with the loved ones they had lost.

For many years, the skies of New York City have been changed each anniversary of September 11<sup>th</sup> by the Tribute in Light, two towers of light streamed into the sky, mimicking in light the way the Twin Towers were so tall they could be seen for miles away.

Neither of these memorials were without controversy, and they are good reminders of the questions: Who should we remember and why? Who decides how we use public space? What can we do if we want to memorialize someone?

**POST-READING:** Find a memorial and write about it, answering the following questions: Who or what does it commemorate? What does it look like? Where is it located? When did it start? Who started it? What do you like/dislike about it?

Hillary Gardner is an ESOL professional development coordinator at City University of New York. To further explore memorials, see <[www.911memorial.org](http://www.911memorial.org)>, <[www.tributeinlight.org](http://www.tributeinlight.org)>, <[www.livingmemorialsproject.net](http://www.livingmemorialsproject.net)>, <[www.streetmemorials.org](http://www.streetmemorials.org)>, and <[www.aidsquilt.org](http://www.aidsquilt.org)>.



The Pentagon Memorial honors the 184 victims who died at this location on 9/11. Illuminated benches were arranged according to the victim’s ages, starting with Dana Falkenberg, 3, to John Yamnicky Sr., 71.

# First Writing Since

*Suheir Hammad*

the dead are called lost and their families hold up shaky  
printouts in front of us through screens smoked up.  
we are looking for iris, mother of three. please call with any  
information. we are searching for priti, last seen on the 103rd  
floor. she was talking to her husband on the phone and the line  
went. please help us find george, also known as adel. his family is  
waiting for him with his favorite meal. i am looking for my son, who  
was delivering coffee. i am looking for my sister girl, she started  
her job on monday.  
i am looking for peace. i am looking for mercy. i am looking for  
evidence of compassion. any evidence of life. i am looking for  
life.

---

*Suheir Hammad is the author of a book of poems, Born Palestinian, Born Black, and the memoir Drops of This Story. This is an excerpt from her poem, taken from <[www.rethinkingschools.org](http://www.rethinkingschools.org)>.*



*Missing persons flyers in Union Square Park in New York City, several days after 9/11.*

# 9/11 Still Affects Me

Andrea Dacosta

The events of 9/11 have greatly affected me. That morning, I watched the television. I saw the second plane crash into the Twin Towers in New York City. I felt so sad, especially for the people who did not hear from their family members and friends.

The events of 9/11 continue to personally affect me. When I make a decision to travel by airplane, my thoughts go back to 9/11. Sometimes I become nervous. I re-live the sad memories. Moreover, when I come to the airport, I have to take off my shoes, and the security officers scan my whole body. It makes me feel very uncomfortable to go through the whole security procedure.

Tragedies can happen without warning. We need to make sure that we don't take people or life for granted. We need to embrace our loved ones who live close by. We need to write or call our loved ones who live far away.



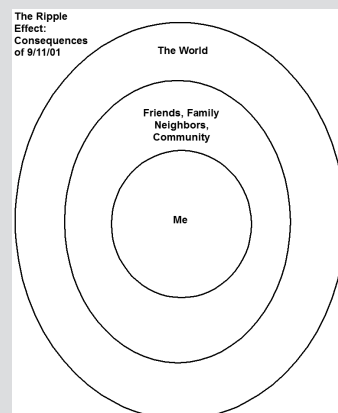
Andrea Dacosta is a student at Project Hope in Roxbury, MA. She is a single mom of two children. Andrea was born and raised in Jamaica and came to Boston ten years ago. America has opened up many opportunities for her.

## The Ripple Effect

**Think about** the “ripple effect” of consequences of September 11, 2001. How did that day affect you, your family, friends, neighbors, community, and the world?

**Using the diagram** on the right as a model, write your ideas in the “ripples.” Share with a partner or a small group. Are we still experiencing effects? If so, how?

**How did this exercise** make you feel? Are you interested in taking action around on issues related to 9/11? See p. 54 for some resources and action ideas.



See an expanded version of this lesson plan by Abigail Ellman of We Make the Road New York at [www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras](http://www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras), where a larger version of the ripple diagram is also available.

# Paying Tribute through Service

*Nici Marderosian*

In 2002, President Bush, declared September 11th a day of remembrance. This day has been set aside to honor the victims and the heroes of that tragic, sorrowful time. In 2009, President Obama signed a law making 9/11 a national day of service.

This is a remarkable way to remember those whose lives were taken so suddenly and tragically. Everyone who is able should donate their time to assisting others. Those in need might include people who worked at Ground Zero and who lost their health because of the dust and asbestos they inhaled at the World Trade Center site (see the box below). Others might still be putting their lives back together after losing their homes, jobs, and loved ones.

There are many people who are still trying to pick up the pieces of their broken hearts ten years later. Perhaps we could contribute to their healing if we come up with our own way of donating, giving, or supporting people who are in need.

## The Death Toll Continues to Grow

Tens of thousands of workers who helped look for survivors and clean up Ground Zero were exposed to an estimated 2,500 different toxins, including lead, mercury, asbestos, and dioxin. These can cause cancer as well as heart, liver, lung, and kidney diseases. More than 1,000 first responders have died from illnesses caused by the toxic debris cloud. Thousands more have gotten sick.

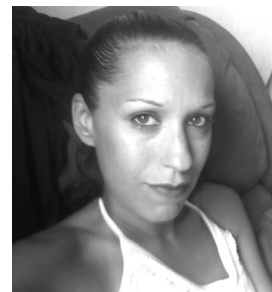
Adapted from <healthland.time.com>, May 3, 2011



*A volunteer receives thank you notes after participating in 9/11 National Day of Service. To find out more, visit <www.serve.gov> or <911day.org>.*

Americans have always rallied and shown true patriotic spirit when tragedy strikes. Let's take the energy that is generated by this sadness and turn it into a force for positive actions, not just for the immediate victims but for all citizens. We will never forget the past but we can move forward together in unity.

*Nici Marderosian is a student at the Bristol Community College ABE Program, in Attleboro, MA. She is striving to obtain her GED so she can continue on to college to major in journalism and broadcasting. As a single mother of two boys, ages 4 and 6, she leads a very active life while maintaining her studies and serving as a Student Council Advisory representative.*



# We and They

*Lucille Clifton*

Boris and Yuki and Sarah and Sue  
and Karl and Latanya, Maria too  
dreamed of the world  
and it was spinning  
and all the people  
just talked about winning  
the wind was burning  
the water was churning  
the trees were bending  
Something was ending  
and all the talk was “we” and “they”  
the children all hugged themselves  
waiting for the day  
when the night of the long bad dream  
is done  
and all the family of humans  
are one  
and being and winning are not the  
same  
and “we” and “they” is just a game  
and the wind is a friend that  
doesn’t fuss  
and every They is  
actually Us.



*Lucille Clifton (1936-2010) was a prolific poet. She said in an interview that she writes because "writing is a way of continuing to hope ... perhaps for me it is a way of remembering I am not alone." <[www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org)>*

## **“We and They” and You!**

**Why is we/they so appealing?**

**What** “we’s” and “they’s” do you see in your community?

**What is your response** to George Bush’s remarks to Congress on September 20, 2001: “Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.”

# Understanding vs. Fear

*Glenn McDaniel*

My first response to the events of 9/11 ten years ago has changed over time. When I saw what was happening on television, I was in a state of shock. I felt fear. I was afraid of all the things that this could lead to. I was afraid that my world was

about to fall apart.

**When I respond to something out of fear, the response is usually to kill it, destroy it, or in some way get rid of it.**

I am not sure how much time passed. It must have been at least five or six years before I remembered the words of Franklin D. Roosevelt: "We have nothing to fear but fear itself."

I am afraid of what I don't know or understand, such as things that go bump in the night, because I don't know what it is or understand why it made that sound. When I respond to something out of fear, my response is usually to kill it, destroy it, or in some way get rid of it.

## Responding to Fear

**What is the main point the author makes about fear?**

**What are the different types of responses to the fear of the unknown he discusses?**

**Can you think of positive and negative examples of how people have dealt with the fear of the unknown?**

**Watch this excellent 7-minute video exploring how fear drives religious intolerance:** <<http://prepareny.ning.com/forum/topics/we-the-people>>.

When our fear is of other people or their way of life, the best way to deal with it is to learn as much as possible about the people and their way of life. If we can understand them and they can understand us, we have a good chance to work out our problems. I know that this is not always possible but if it was our first response, maybe we could save ourselves a lot of trouble later.

When you have people who, for whatever reason, hate other people they use fear to get others to join with them. If we let ourselves be led by fear and not by knowledge, we will be led down the road to destruction. If we know and care for the well-being of other people, it is very hard for us to do harm to them.

We use this type of reasoning in other areas of our life, such as when we deal with cancer or some other disease. We spend millions of dollars to try and find out all we can about it so we will know how to control it and maybe find a cure for it. It seems to me that this would be a good way to deal with people as well. If we would take the time to learn about our enemies and teach them about us, we might just learn to be friends and not enemies.

I know that this is a lot harder than I have made it sound, but if we could love our neighbor as ourselves, maybe we could solve our problems. I wish that this could be our attitude, instead of kill it, destroy it, or in some way get rid of it.

*Glenn McDaniel is a student at the Fort Smith Adult Education Center in Fort Smith, AR.*

**If we let ourselves be led by fear and not by knowledge we will be led down the road to destruction.**



# Steps on a Journey from Grief to Forgiveness, 2001-2011

David Potorti

*My brother died in the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. My grief led me to the hope that others would not experience my loss and pain. Since speaking out about my brother's death, I've been on a journey with countless people in the U.S. and around the world who have taught me that terrorism, violence, and war have touched the lives of everyone. Their fellowship has been a comfort and a joy, and has made my path much easier. I'm grateful for what they continue to teach me.*

*See <[www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras](http://www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras)> for discussion questions and lesson plans. -- ed.*



In December 2001, family members of 9/11 victims participated in a Walk for Healing and Peace from Washington, DC, to New York City. People didn't quite know what to think of our small group as we made our way up Broadway that day. The wreckage of the Twin Towers was still smoldering a few blocks away, and there was still a great deal of fear and anger in the air. From this experience, our group, September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, was born.

In 2003, we edited a book entitled, *September 11<sup>th</sup> Families for Peaceful Tomorrows: Turning Our Grief into Action for Peace*. I was thrilled to learn that it was being translated into Japanese. The publisher sent us to Japan so we could speak about our book. Because of Japan's tragic experiences with the atomic bomb at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and its national constitution which renounces war, our group's stand against violence held great interest for the Japanese. They mobbed us wherever we visited.

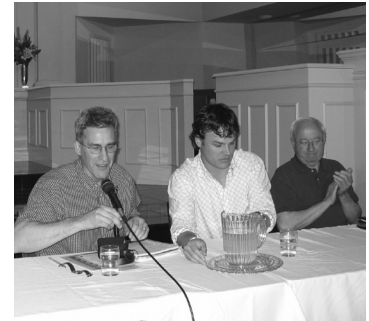


Here I am with Peaceful Tomorrows members. Behind us is the Stonewalk memorial to the "unknown civilians killed in war." It was created by the Peace Abbey. Members and supporters of Peaceful Tomorrows pulled this memorial stone from Boston to New York City in 2004 to highlight civilian losses to terrorism, violence, and war.



In March 2005 I drove to Fayetteville, North Carolina, to lend my voice to veterans and members of military families announcing the launch of the “Bring Them Home Now” campaign. Joining me was Michael Berg, whose son Nick had been murdered in Iraq a year earlier. He and I spoke to the largest antiwar rally in the city since the Vietnam War. I’ve kept in touch with Michael ever since, and feel a shared bond of loss.

Several Peaceful Tomorrows members went to Oklahoma City in April 2005 for the 10th commemoration of the terrorist attack on the Alfred P. Murrah federal building. Pictured on the right is Bud Welch, who lost his daughter in the bombing. Bud is the president of Murder Victims Families for Human Rights. (See pp. 42-43 to learn more about Bud Welch.)



In 2005, I traveled to Spain. I was deeply moved by meeting family members of those who had been killed in the Al Qaeda train bombings in Madrid in 2004. In Guernica, we met with survivors of the 1937 German bombardment of the town. The survivors, all children at the time, retained vivid memories of the aerial attacks, which had occurred almost 70 years earlier.

In 2007, I spoke at a Veterans for Peace convention. It was the first time I was able to talk about my father, a veteran of World War II, to a group of other veterans of U.S. wars. Dad had given me a book recounting his experience. In it, he wrote: “May you never know the obscenity of war with all its pain and sorrow and destructiveness.” I was honored to share his words with those other veterans. Also speaking were Howard Zinn and Daniel Ellsberg, who appear in this photo with me.



Today one of my greatest pleasures is volunteering as a second grade Sunday school teacher at our church. Peace begins in each one of us. This opportunity to be a role model and to give kids a grounding in spirituality is my way of changing the world, one person at a time.

*David Potorti is a founding member of September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows.*

# The Wrong Way to Fix Differences

*Juana Rosario*

I do not believe that the war on terror is the right way for the U.S. to respond to 9/11. The cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is enormous. Between 100,000 and one million innocent Iraqis and more than 4,000 U.S. soldiers have died. My son was in Iraq as a soldier for one year. It is difficult for him to talk about his experience, but he says the war was terrible, illegal, and full of lies.

The biggest lie may be the one that got us into the war in the first place. The U.S. said that Iraq had Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs), and it would be dangerous if terrorists could use them. Now we know that Iraq didn't have WMDs.

The war in Iraq is illegal because international law says you can't attack another country unless that country attacks you first. Iraq did not invade the United States. Iraq is an independent country. The U.S. should not have invaded it and we should not now be occupying it.

The majority of American people do not support the U.S. war in Iraq, but our government continues occupying the country anyway.

My two sons didn't always agree with each other as children. Many times, they had arguments. But I explained to them, "Your brother thinks like that and you think differently. He can go one way and you can go another way."

I think that when people have differences, they can fix them by talking, not by using violence.



*Juana and her two sons*

I know this from my experience every day. Many people make big arguments for no reason. But even if people are angry, you can talk to them and they can understand.

**Sources:** <[www.pollingreport.com/iraq.htm](http://www.pollingreport.com/iraq.htm)>, <<http://rt.com/usa/news/real-toll-americas-wars-odyssey-dawn/>>, <[www.tni.org/article/understanding-us-iraq-crisis-2](http://www.tni.org/article/understanding-us-iraq-crisis-2)>.

*Juana Rosario was born in the Dominican Republic and has lived in the U.S. for 24 years. All that time, she wanted to learn English, but she was working a full-time job and had two children to care for so she didn't have time to study. Now that her kids are adults, she has time to dedicate to learning English. She is a student at We Make the Road New York in Jackson Heights, Queens.*

## For Discussion

**In what ways** is violence easier than talking through differences?

**What is your experience** with conflict resolution? What are the advantages and disadvantages of using violence versus talking?

**As Juana states**, "Iraq didn't have Weapons of Mass Destruction." How can the U.S. ensure that such large mistakes are not made in the future?

# I'm Looking for Justice, Not Vengeance

**A 9/11 widow talks about working for peace when the world expects her to want revenge.**

*Brooke Jarvis*

**Would you mind telling me about your experience on 9/11?**

My husband, Robert LeBlanc, taught at the University of New Hampshire; he was on his way to a conference in Los Angeles that morning. He flew out of Logan Airport in Boston on Flight 175, one of the planes that hit the World Trade Center.

This past Sunday, I was out enjoying the day. It was such a beautiful, glorious day. And it struck me that it could be lost in a flash. That's what happened on 9/11: we were blindsided. 9/11 was devastating, for lots of reasons. It took me and my family a long time to come to grips with it.

**How did you feel when you heard the news about the killing of bin Laden?**

None of us felt like celebrating. People keep asking, "So did this bring closure?" But I don't know if I believe there is such a thing. When tragedy hits, you slowly, over time, learn to absorb it. It becomes part of the fabric of your life; it doesn't go away, you just learn to live with it.

Osama bin Laden was one man. His death



*Andrea LeBlanc (3rd from left) in Italy at the Perugia-to-Assisi Peoples' Peace March which concluded the 7th People's United Nations in October 2007.*

hatefulness?

**How did you get involved with Families for a Peaceful Tomorrow?**

After 9/11, I felt very alone amidst all the flag-waving and rallying to war because that wasn't my response, wasn't my kids' response, and wouldn't have been my husband's response.

Before I found out about Peaceful Tomorrows, I had seen a TV program about a group of people who had lost family members on 9/11. They had gone to Afghanistan to meet with families who had lost family members to U.S. bombs. (See the article by Rita Lasar on p. 14.) I sat there

doesn't solve the problem. 9/11 didn't come out of nowhere; there were decisions, including on the part of the U.S., that led to it. Important questions still haven't really been asked, much less answered. I find myself thinking the same things I thought on 9/11: Where does this come from? What has happened to these human beings that made it possible for them to make such horrific attacks? What spurs that



*Andrea LeBlanc (middle) at a peace rally in Washington, DC, on January 18, 2003. The banner she is carrying says, "Peaceful Tomorrows for All."*

in tears, so grateful that someone had done something that made sense to me.

**Why has Peaceful Tomorrows been so important to you?**

The idea that really resonates with me is that we have a choice, all the time, about what we do with our emotions. Anger and despair can both destroy you—I might have succumbed to despair if I hadn't found Peaceful Tomorrows—but you've got a choice to not let that happen, to instead do something positive with the emotion.

**What is an example of a positive response?**

For the 5-year commemoration of 9/11, we convened an international meeting of 30 organizations that all were essentially about bringing together victims and victims' families to look for nonviolent solutions to conflict. (See article by Terry Greene on p. 40.) These were people from all over the world. Truly horrific things had happened to them and their families. I met a Rwandan



*Andrea LeBlanc (left) at the founding meeting of the International Network for Peace, which took place on the fifth anniversary of 9/11.*

who lost 35 members of his family; I met people whose lives, villages, potential, and future were destroyed. In a lot of ways, what they faced was far more devastating than what happened to us on 9/11. I said that to a Rwandan, and he said, "You're wrong. It's all the same."

These people gathered together, and we were immediately friends. We created the International Network for Peace.

There are lots of stories like that out there. But people don't know about them. The history books focus on the terrible things, the stories of war and hatred and trauma. My own personal mission is to make those stories of peace and humanity as ubiquitous as the terrible things—there's so much good in the world that people don't know about, but need to know about.

I'm a grandmother. I think that my grandchildren deserve to have the wealth of these stories and to know about people who did things another way, who didn't use violence.

**Could you tell me a bit about your husband?**

At his memorial service, someone said that Bob would have been the person we all would have turned to for a better understanding of what was really behind the attacks. He was always inter-



*Robert G. LeBlanc was killed on Flight 175 on 9/11. His family created the Robert G. LeBlanc Memorial Scholarship at the University of New Hampshire; it is awarded to undergraduate students for study abroad.*

ested in knowing why people did what they did, believed what they did, ate what they ate, lived where they lived. He firmly believed that the more you actually go to places and meet people and try to understand them, the more you realize that the human commonalities are far greater than the differences, and harder to deny. And, one would hope, harder to vilify.

At the service, a colleague also quoted the Qur'an: "O Mankind, We have created you from a male and female, made you into tribes and nations, that you may know one another, not that you may hate one another." And he said it was ironic that Bob was killed by the very forces that didn't know the other when he spent his whole life trying to understand the other.

*Brooke Jarvis interviewed Andrea LeBlanc for YES! Magazine. Brooke is YES! Magazine's web editor.*



*Andrea LeBlanc is a member of Peaceful Tomorrows. She worked as a veterinarian for 37 years. She and her husband, Robert LeBlanc, parented five children, and Andrea has nine grandchildren.*

## Take it Further

**Write the definitions** of these words and phrases from the interview:

blindsided \_\_\_\_\_

come to grips \_\_\_\_\_

ubiquitous \_\_\_\_\_

trauma \_\_\_\_\_

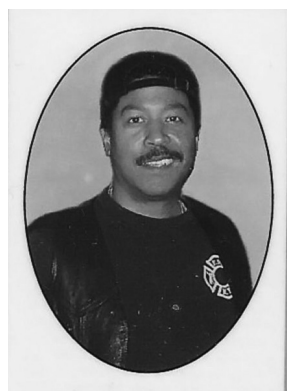
vilify \_\_\_\_\_

**Discuss this quote** from Andrea: *"The idea that really resonates with me is that we have a choice, all the time, about what we do with our emotions. Anger and despair can both destroy you... But you've got a choice to not let that happen, to instead do something positive with the emotion."*

**Share a time** in your own experience when you made a choice about how to deal with anger and despair.

# We Fought Intolerance (And We Are Still Fighting)

*Gloria Williams and Ken Williams*



*On September 11, 2001, Vernon Paul Cherry (in photo on left), a New York City firefighter, perished in the south tower of the World Trade Center. Vernon Paul died as so many other heroic firefighters did, shepherding building occupants to safety at the risk of their own lives. Vernon Paul was a son, father, and husband, and he*

*was brother to Kenneth and Gloria Williams.*

## Fighting Discrimination Then and Now

Firstly, we do not seek vengeance against anyone. We have lived peacefully in a multicultural community for many years and certainly do not hold the Muslim community accountable for the acts of terrorism that happened on 9/11. It is our wish that whenever the persons responsible are caught, that the rule of law prevail. (See pp. 48-49.)

As we mark the tenth anniversary of this horrific occasion, we would like to offer our thoughts about the religious intolerance that has gotten worse since 9/11. Discrimination against Muslims reminds us of the discrimination we faced many years ago.

We offer these memories as a mirror to a past we do not wish to return to. Our prayers and wishes are truly for Peaceful Tomorrows.

## Gloria remembers...

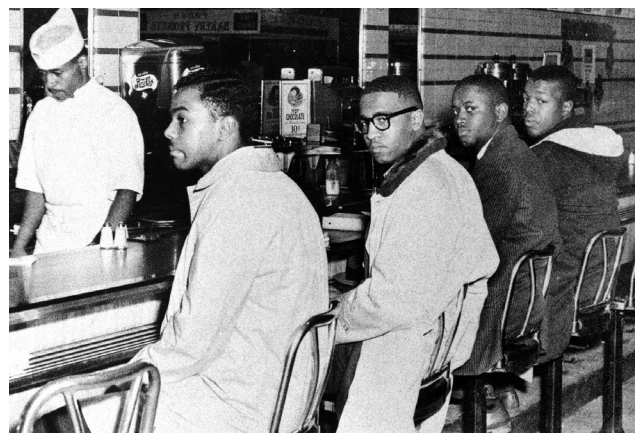
When I see intolerance or discrimination of any kind I am taken back to when I was a little girl in St. Louis, Missouri. My grandmother used to take me to a huge market called Soulard Market which for me was a place of wonderment. There were



aisles and aisles of fruits and vegetables. There were counters of wonderfully pink meats which conjured thoughts of delicious meals to come.

Laden with bags of all our goods, I would look longingly at the food counter filled with white shoppers enjoying a rest and a meal. I wondered why we could not sit there and eat. My grandmother explained we were not allowed to eat there because we were black and we had to go into our own neighborhood to eat. I never saw a sign in St. Louis that said blacks were not allowed, but I learned that I was not allowed in certain places. In the 1960s, activists held sit-ins at lunch counters that used such practices, and the civil rights movement began.

Today when I visit St. Louis, I can eat anywhere I want and the little girl in me is always amazed!



*Four civil rights activists sit in seats designated for white people at the racially segregated Woolworths' lunch counter in Greensboro, NC, in 1960.*

Although we have made progress, prejudice still exists. People are excluded because of nationality, race, religious choices, or simply being different. We must keep fighting ignorance and intolerance.

## Ken remembers...

In 1956, when I was serving my country in the U.S. Air Force, stationed in San Francisco, the other airmen and I began a movement to end segregation at the Service Club.

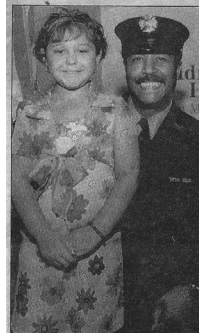
The Service Club provided recreation for the men stationed on the base. Each Friday, the Service Club director would book a white band to play for the men. The girls who came there to dance with the airmen were white and not allowed to dance with the black airmen. My buddy and I organized demonstrations against this policy. We asked the NAACP for help. Finally, after several months of no satisfaction, we decided to take to the stage, we stopped the band from playing. My buddy made a beautiful speech about togetherness. We then placed chairs in the middle of the floor and began a sit-down demonstration.

The white airmen attacked us and violence broke out. The police came and most of the black airmen were arrested. The NAACP defended us and we were able to win the case. The Service Club was then integrated with white and black girls available as dancing partners. Since I was one of the organizers, the military found a way to punish me. They sent me far away to Alaska



*Christmas dance at a Negro Service Club during World War II. Civil rights activists fought to have the military desegregated, which it was in 1948.*

## Firemen's song gave stricken girl hope



By MICHELE MCPHIE  
Daily News Staff Writer

Standing amid the sea of firefighters who plan to say goodbye this morning to Vernon Cherry, the Fire Department's official singer, will be a chubby 7-year-old girl from the Bronx.

Little Crystal Ann Perez believes the fireman helped save her life.

In August, Crystal was bedridden with leukemia and feeling awful when the burly, mustached Cherry fumbled into her room at Montefiore Medical Center and flashed his trademark ear-to-ear smile.

Cherry and two of his colleagues, Leon Smith and John Sorrentino, calling themselves the Fire Department's Oreo Cookie, had recorded a melody with the Songs of Love Foundation for terminally ill children in little Crystal's honor. Cherry wanted to play it for her.

It would be Cherry's last recorded song. Cherry and Smith were two of the six firefighters aboard the Brooklyn Heights Ladder Co. 118 truck that was photographed crossing the Brooklyn Bridge as it headed toward the World Trade Center on Sept. 11. All six men were lost in the disaster.

The eerie picture of the men driving to their deaths was featured on the front page of the Daily News.

**GIFT** Firefighter Vernon Cherry, who died at Trade Center, recorded a song for ailing Crystal Ann Perez in August.

Crystal's song was played at a memorial service for Ladder 118's fallen last week — after Sorrentino announced the little girl's leukemia was now in remission.

"This is Firefighter Cherry," the song began, resonating through Assumption Church in Brooklyn Heights over the sobs of Cherry's wife of 31 years, Joann. "Crystal Ann Perez, you make it all worthwhile. You brighten up our world with your beautiful smile."

The song also says, "Crystal draws like nobody else. She's got the style to impress. Take a look at her artwork. It's really the best."

Crystal said yesterday from her Castle Hill home: "I feel so sad Fireman Cherry is not here anymore. He sang me a song. He gave me a hug."

"She plays the song over and over and over again. Everyone in the family knows every single word of the song," said Crystal's mother, Lorraine Perez. "She's taken it to school with her. She carries it everywhere, listens to it constantly. We think it saved her."

Cherry had been the Fire Department's official singer since he became a firefighter in 1973. He also fronted a band called Starfire, which had gigs all over the city and specialized in Italian weddings.

"He was the best. He even learned how to sing songs in Italian," Sorrentino said of his friend. "The choir of angels up in heaven must have needed a new singer."

The memorial service for Cherry will be held at 11 a.m. today at the Antioch Baptist Church at Northern Blvd. and 103rd St. in Corona, Queens.

*This Daily News article tells the story of how Vernon Cherry recorded a song for Crystal Ann Perez, who was sick with leukemia. Vernon created the song for the Songs of Love Foundation, which records music for terminally ill children. He also sang with the band, Starfire. This was the last song Vernon recorded before he died. "I feel so sad Fireman Cherry is not here anymore," she said. "He sang me a song. He gave me a hug."*

to complete my final years in the Air Force. But I am proud of what we did. The actions we took are now noted in the Air Force Archives. We made history!

Since 9/11, people of the Muslim faith find themselves faced with much suspicion and mistrust. Like the black airmen of my experience, they find themselves in the position of having to defend themselves against stereotypes. They are forced to defend themselves without having done anything wrong. Black men in the 1940s and 50s faced harsh repercussions if they intermingled with white women. Their only crime was the color of their skin. This is much like people of the Muslim faith when they are trying to board a plane or just going about their normal lives. These law-abiding people are being punished for what fanatical criminals have done. This is just not acceptable!

Ken and Gloria Williams are members of September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows. They reside in the Bronx, New York. They have two daughters, Dena and Carissa, and an extended family member, Angel the cat.

# Rejecting Retaliation

## Victims of Violence Work for Peace and Security

*Terry Greene*

In 2006, on the fifth anniversary of 9/11, members of September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows joined with others from around the world who were also personally affected by violence. Each has rejected the idea of retaliating with further violence. Instead, they have successfully built bridges between groups previously in conflict and have formed organizations to promote justice, reconciliation, and genuine peace. Together, we launched the International Network for Peace to turn our grief into action for peace across the world.

The stories of these men and women can help us educate ordinary Americans about the real costs of war – the civilian casualties, families torn apart, hopes denied, children dying or living in fear – that we so seldom hear. At the same time, their successes promoting conflict resolution and healing offer a vision of peace that is achievable and sustainable.

Here are a few stories of victims of violence who have rejected retaliation.

### **Joanna Berry, UK**

*In 1984, Jo's father was killed when the Irish Republican Army (IRA) planted a bomb in a hotel where he was attending a conference. Jo decided to draw meaning from this tragedy; her path led her to Ireland, to other victims of the IRA, and to victims who had suffered on both sides of the divide – Catholic and Protestant. In 2000, she met Patrick Magee, the man who planted the bomb. Jo's story and her meeting with Patrick were recorded in the BBC documentary "Facing the Enemy." Since their first meeting, they have worked together for peace. Jo is the founder of Building Bridges for Peace.*

I have been on a long journey since my father, Anthony Berry, a member of parliament, was killed in an IRA bombing. In the days after

the bomb I wanted to somehow bring something positive out of the tragedy, and I began a journey of healing. The last 25 years have been full of remarkable experiences.

In November 2000, I met Pat Magee, the man responsible for planting the bomb, and we have now become friends. For me, the question is about whether I can let go of my need to blame, and open my heart enough to hear Pat's story and understand his motivations. The truth is that sometimes I can and sometimes I can't and this choice is always there.

I wanted to meet Pat, to hear his story and see him as a real human being. At our first meeting I was terrified. But as soon as we met, we



*Patrick Magee and Jo Berry*



The IRA was the military wing of the Irish independence movement that has fought British colonialism for many years. In the map above, independent Ireland is a darker shade than Northern Ireland, which is still part of the United Kingdom.

talked with an extraordinary intensity. I shared a lot about my father, while Pat told me some of his story. I realized half-way through that first meeting that I was at the beginning of another journey.

I still have feelings that are painful. I still get angry. But I have learned that these feelings can be transformed into passion for change. At first, I wanted to stop the cycle of violence and revenge in *me*. Now, I want to help create a *world* in which violence is not seen as a viable way of resolving conflict.

My commitment is to see the humanity in everyone. Building Bridges for Peace is now an umbrella for all the work that I do to participate in creating a peaceful world.

### Jean Baptiste Ntakirutimana, Rwanda

*At age 29, while Jean Baptiste was studying theology in Kenya, he lost his parents, nine brothers, sister, uncles and aunts, nephews and nieces in the 1994 Tutsi genocide committed by the Hutu. Currently he is the Country Director of Orphans of Rwanda, Inc. He is actively involved in many peace-building and reconciliation initiatives in Rwanda and the region. In April 2008, he visited his mother's killer in prison where he is serving a 28-year sentence.*



Tutsi and Hutu are social/ethnic groups in Rwanda. Due to longstanding tensions, made worse by Belgian colonizers, a conflict erupted in 1994. The Hutus, who controlled the government, killed more than half a million Tutsis in 100 days.

When I met Mr. Turikunkiko, the man who killed my mother, he was trembling and afraid to look me in the eyes. My heart was beating twice as fast as normal. I was fortunate to have taken along a friend, Joseph Nyamutera, who had agreed to mediate and be there as a support.

Joseph started by explaining the reason for our visit: I had come to learn about what happened to my family and to initiate my own healing process. I also wanted to offer Mr. Turikunkiko an opportunity to initiate his own healing and relief from the memories he had been carrying with him for 14 years.

I inquired first about his life in prison, his family, and his state of mind. He told us that he was living very miserably. He felt disowned and abandoned by his wife and children. He told us that he was expecting me to want to kill him,



*Jean Baptiste Ntakirutimana*

which he said would be justice since he had killed my mother.

He described how my people were put in a regional stadium and slaughtered. He added that no one had dared to kill my mother, so she was brought back to her home village by two militia men where they called for others to come forward and kill her. Still no one wanted to do this, until finally Mr. Turikunkiko volunteered. He told us that no one was allowed to loot from Tutsis before killing all family members and since they thought I had already been killed in Kigali, the only hindrance to taking all the family property was my mother. So she had to be killed.

When he started explaining how he killed her, I partly lost consciousness. I prayed to God to revive me and give me more strength to continue, as I felt this was my mission. Miraculously, I then felt warmth spread from my head to my feet. I felt a big rock melting from my chest and head. I felt very refreshed. I cleaned up my tears and carried on the conversation, feeling tremendously relieved throughout my whole being.

Mr. Turikunkiko cried for most of the time. I told him that I was coming to him in the spirit of forgiveness. It was as if a huge veil lifted from his face; he started smiling, full of words of gratitude. He took hold of my hands, telling me many other things about himself and the truth of what happened during the genocide. He also agreed to meet with other people whose family members he had killed.

He was a totally transformed person, as indeed I was, which was the last thing I had expected. I had gone there to help him, but in fact I had got more from the visit than I would ever have personally expected. As I left, I felt as if I was carrying only half my weight.

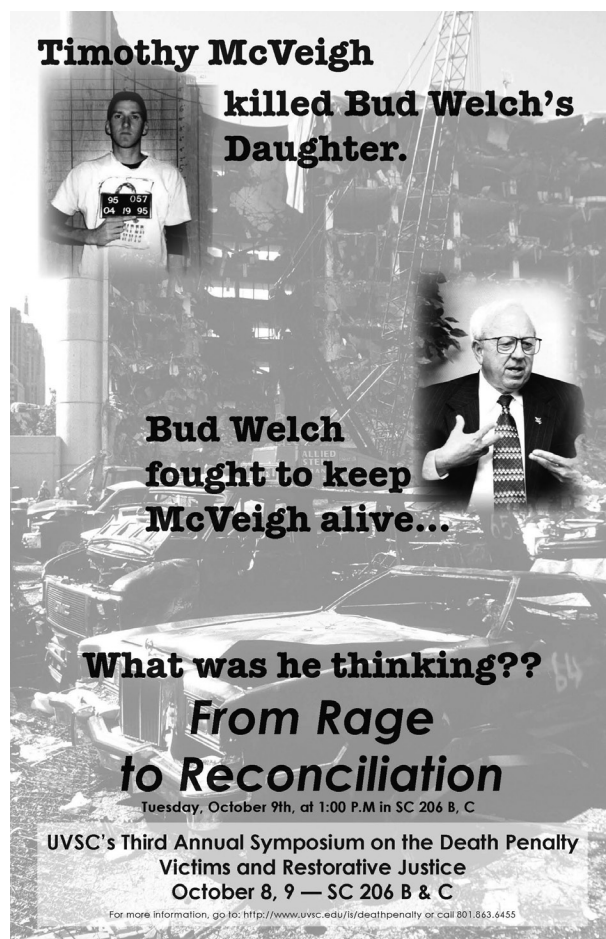
## BUD WELCH, OKLAHOMA CITY, OK

*After his daughter Julie's death in the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, Bud became an outspoken opponent of the death penalty. He has testified before the U.S. Congress, State Senate, and House Judiciary Committees and has met frequently with the father of Timothy*

*McVeigh, the man who detonated the bomb. Bud is the president of Murder Victims Families for Human Rights. In 2001, Timothy McVeigh was executed for his part in the bombing.*

Three days after the bombing, as I watched Tim McVeigh being led out of the courthouse, I hoped someone in a high building with a rifle would shoot him dead. I wanted him to fry. In fact, I'd have killed him myself if I'd had the chance.

Unable to deal with the pain of Julie's death, I started self-medicating with alcohol until eventually the hangovers were lasting all day. Then, on a cold day in January 1996, I came to the bomb-site — as I did every day — and I looked across the



Poster from a symposium on the death penalty held at Utah Valley University in 2007.



*In April 1995, Timothy McVeigh set off a bomb in front of the federal building in Oklahoma City. The explosion killed 168 people and injured 450. He was seeking revenge for the FBI's killing of 76 people in Waco, TX in 1993, which happened after a 50-day siege and gun battle between U.S. authorities and members of a Protestant sect that was stockpiling weapons.*

wasteland where the Murrah Building once stood. My head was splitting from drinking the night before and I thought, "I have to do something different, because what I'm doing isn't working."

For the next few weeks I started to reconcile things in my mind, and I finally concluded that it was revenge and hate that had killed Julie and the 167 others. Seeing what Timothy McVeigh had done with his vengeance, I knew I had to send mine in a different direction. Shortly afterwards, I started speaking out against the death penalty.

I also remembered that I'd seen a news report on Tim McVeigh's father, Bill. He was shown stooping over a flowerbed, and when he stood up I could see that he'd been physically bent over in pain. I recognized it because I was feeling that pain, too.

In December 1998, after Tim McVeigh had been sentenced to death, I had a chance to meet Bill McVeigh at his home near Buffalo. I wanted to show him that I did not blame him. His youngest daughter also wanted to meet me. After Bill showed me his garden, the three of us sat around the kitchen table. Up on the wall were family

snapshots, including Tim's graduation picture. They noticed that I kept looking up at it, so I felt compelled to say something. "God, what a good looking kid," I said.

Earlier, when we'd been in the garden, Bill had asked me, "Bud, are you able to cry?" I'd told him, "I don't usually have a problem crying." His reply was, "I can't cry, even though I've got a lot to cry about." But now, sitting at the kitchen table looking at Tim's photo, a big tear rolled down his face. It was the love of a father for a son.

When I got ready to leave, I shook Bill's hand, then extended it to Jennifer, but she just grabbed me and threw her arms around me. She was the same sort of age as Julie but felt so much taller. I don't know which one of us started crying first. Then I held her face in my hands and said, "Look, honey, the three of us are in this for the rest of our lives. I don't want your brother to die and I'll do everything I can to prevent it." As I walked away from the house I realized that until that moment I had walked alone, but now a tremendous weight had lifted from my shoulders. I had found someone who was a bigger victim of the Oklahoma bombing than I was, because while I can speak in front of thousands of people and say wonderful things about Julie, if Bill McVeigh meets a stranger he probably doesn't even say he had a son.

About a year before the execution I found it in my heart to forgive Tim McVeigh. It was a release for me rather than for him.

Terry Greene's brother, Donald Freeman Greene (pictured below left with Terry), was aboard United Flight 93, which crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. She joined September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows after it became clear to her that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were fueling, not stopping, terrorism and creating unimaginable civilian casualties that dwarfed our own terrible losses on September 11th. Watch a video of Terry Greene and other Peaceful Tomorrows members at [911stories.org](http://911stories.org). This article was compiled from [www.buildingbridgesforpeace.org/founders\\_story.html](http://www.buildingbridgesforpeace.org/founders_story.html), and [theforgivenessproject.com](http://theforgivenessproject.com).



# History of the USA Patriot Act

*Andy Nash*

The USA Patriot Act is a law that aims to strengthen our national security and broaden the powers of law enforcement to identify and stop terrorists. However, at the same time, the Patriot Act erodes civil liberties and many rights that are protected by the Constitution. There has been an on-going debate about whether this trade-off of democratic freedoms for security is wise.

The Patriot Act was signed into law by President Bush six weeks after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. It is a broad law that covers many things: strengthening border security, cutting off funding for terrorists, building a shared information network across law enforcement agencies, and increasing surveillance (wiretapping, searching homes, etc.) of people suspected of being or having connections to terrorists. Specifically, the Patriot Act allows the government to:

- freeze bank assets of organizations suspected of supporting terrorist groups
- ban foreigners with suspected ties to terrorist organizations
- monitor foreign students
- gather personal information and records in secret from doctors, libraries, banks, travel agents, phone companies, and other institutions without having to show a judge any evidence of criminal behavior

## Know Your Acronyms

**“USA PATRIOT” stands for** Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism. It is commonly known as the Patriot Act.

- obtain search warrants to search homes without informing the residents until up to 18 months later
- imprison suspected non-citizens indefinitely and without charge
- expand its power to wiretap suspects and to monitor e-mail messages

## Support for the Act

Supporters of the Patriot Act say that the fact that there has not been a successful terrorist attack on U.S. territory since the act was signed into law shows that it is a success. They note that the law has enabled law enforcement to find and stop terrorist groups in Portland, Oregon; Lackawanna, New York; and Northern Virginia.

## Criticism of the Act

Critics of the Patriot Act say that the law threatens our liberties in ways that seriously undermine our democracy. They are most concerned that the law:

- allows the secret gathering of information by the government
- allows detention without charges, abandoning the right to due process
- allows the government to collect information based on suspicion rather than evidence

The government is now allowed to collect information about citizens without any evidence that those people have acted illegally. Before the Patriot Act, the government had to show “probable cause” that a suspect would engage in criminal activity before invading their privacy.

The government can now get surveillance orders based, in part, on the books people read, Web sites they visit, or a letter to the editor they have written. Before the Patriot Act, these free speech activities were not justification for surveillance.

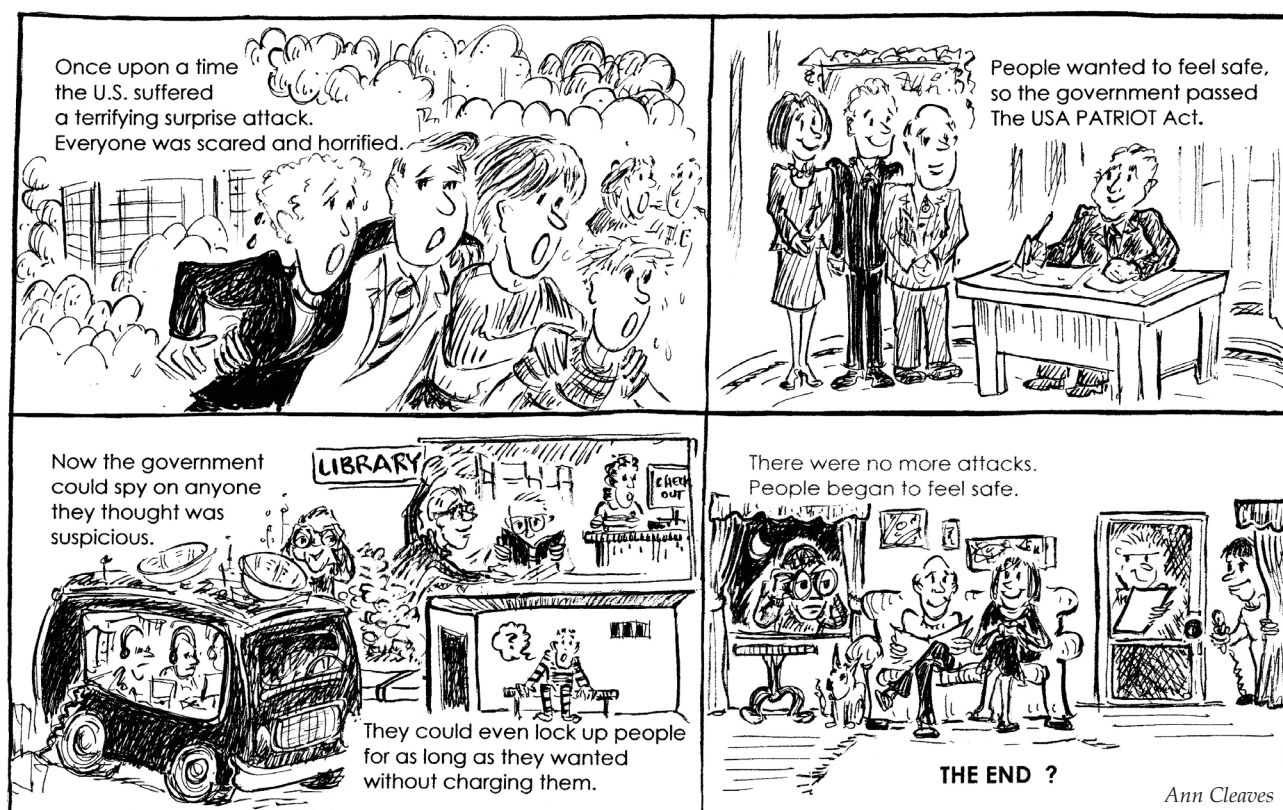
Now, a person or organization (such as a doctor, internet provider, bank, etc.) that is forced to turn over your records to the government is prohibited from telling anyone that the search has occurred. As a result of this gag order, the subjects of surveillance never find out that their personal records have been examined by the government. Before the Patriot Act, individuals were told about such searches and could challenge them in court.

The government can now hold suspected terrorists indefinitely without charging them. Before the Patriot Act, we followed the Constitutional right to *habeas corpus*. Habeas corpus is the right to appear before a court to be charged and to challenge whether that detention is lawful.

## Today

The Patriot Act has been reauthorized three times: in 2006, 2010, and 2011. Each time, some lawmakers have proposed restrictions on when the FBI can use its surveillance powers. Others have proposed greater monitoring and public reporting about how these powers are being used. But Congress and Presidents Bush and Obama have continued to reauthorize the law, for the most part, without adding protections for civil liberties.

Andy Nash is a Professional Development Specialist at World Education. She is the editor of *Through the Lens of Social Justice: Using The Change Agent in Adult Education*.



**Study the cartoon.** Why does the cartoonist use a question mark after “The End”?

**What freedoms and rights** would you be willing to give up to feel more secure?

**Read further** on balancing security and liberty on pp. 48-49.

# Detained and Tortured

*Maher Arar*

Before I tell you who I am and what happened to me, I will tell you who I am not.

I am not a terrorist. I am not a member of Al Qaeda and I do not know any one who belongs to this group.

Now, let me tell you who I am.

I am a Syrian-born Canadian. I moved here with my parents when I was 17 years old. I went

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**My flight to Montreal had a connection in New York, and this is when my nightmare began.**

---

to university and studied hard, and eventually obtained a Masters degree in telecommunications. I met my wife, Monia, at McGill University. We fell in love and eventually married in

1994. I knew then that she was special, but I had no idea how special she would turn out to be. If it were not for her I believe I would still be in prison.

We have two children, a daughter named

Barâa and a son named Houd.

So this is who I am. I am a father and a husband. I am a telecommunications engineer and entrepreneur.

I have never

had trouble with the police and have always been a good citizen. So I still cannot believe what has happened to me, and how my life and career have been destroyed.

In September 2002, I was with my wife and children, and her family, vacationing in Tunis. I got an email from work saying they needed me

to come back. I said goodbye to my wife and family and headed back home.

My flight to Montreal had a connection in New York, and this is when my nightmare began. I was pulled aside at Immigration. From that moment I was interrogated, held in prison, chained and blindfolded until I was finally told by the authorities that I would be deported to Syria. I told them that I would be tortured there. They said that that was not their responsibility.

In Syria, I was very, very scared. My prison guards took me to the basement. They opened a door, and I looked in. I could not believe what I saw. I asked how long I would be kept in this place. They did not answer, but put me in and closed the door. It was like a grave. It had no light. It was three feet wide. It was six feet long.

I spent ten months, and ten days inside that grave. During this time they interrogated me for many hours. They beat me. They put me in a room where I could hear other prisoners being tortured.

They beat me with a black electri-



*Maher Arar and his wife, Monia.*

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**It was like a grave. It had no light. It was three feet wide. It was six feet deep.**

---



*Maher with his children.*



*Maher pauses during a press conference in Ottawa.*

cal cable, about two inches thick. At the end of the day they told me tomorrow would be worse. So I could not sleep.

Sometimes, I felt like I would break down. Memories crowded my mind and I thought I was going to lose control, and I just screamed and screamed. I could not breathe well after, and I felt very dizzy. I told them whatever they wanted to hear so that they would stop torturing me.

On October 5, 2003, I was put in a room with a prosecutor. He read from my “confession,” and said I would be released. I was finally sent home

to Canada thanks to the efforts of my wife, Monia, and others who stood up for justice.

**Sources:** Adapted by Cynthia Peters from <maherarar.net>.

*Maher Arar is a telecommunications engineer and editor of <prism-magazine.com>, which monitors security practices. Portrait (right) by Bud Schultz.*



## What Happened Next?

After being released, Maher Arar returned to Canada and has been working to clear his name and hold the Canadian and U.S. governments responsible for its actions. On September 18, 2006, the Canadian Commission of Inquiry, issued a report exonerating Arar. It states that there is no evidence linking Arar to terrorist activity. On January 26, 2007, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a formal apology to Arar on behalf of the Canadian government and announced that Arar would receive a \$10.5 million settlement for his ordeal.

On November 2, 2009, a U.S. federal Court of Appeals dismissed Arar’s case against U.S. officials for their role in sending him to Syria to be tortured and interrogated for a year. Arar was represented by the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR). The court concluded that Arar’s case raised too many sensitive foreign policy and secrecy issues to permit relief. It leaves the federal officials involved free of any legal accountability for what they did.

Georgetown law professor and CCR cooperating attorney David Cole, who argued the case, said: “This decision says that U.S. officials can intentionally send a man to be tortured abroad, bar him from any access to the courts while doing so, and then avoid any legal accountability

thereafter. It effectively places executive officials above the law, even when accused of a conscious conspiracy to torture.”

CCR  
Senior Staff Attorney

Maria LaHood said, “With this decision, we have lost much more than Maher Arar’s case against torture—we have lost the rule of law, the moral high ground, our independent judiciary, and our commitment to the Constitution of the United States.”

**Sources:** <pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=1509>, <ccrjustice.org>.



*Supporters of Maher Arar demonstrated before a court hearing on his right to sue the U.S. for damages.*

## For You to Investigate

Attorney Maria LaHood says in the above quote that we have lost “the rule of law.” Work with others to write a definition of “rule of law.” See pp. 48-49 for more on this topic.

# How Do We Bring Terrorists to Justice? Follow the Law!

*Zeke Johnson*

In the name of countering terrorism, is the United States losing site of its commitment to valued principles? The U.S. government has been accused of serious violations of human rights. Amnesty International is among a number of human rights groups that have raised concerns. They have identified cases of torture, murder, kidnapping, “disappearances,” detention without charge, and unfair trials—at Guantanamo and other secret prisons. These human rights violations are immoral and illegal under U.S. and international law.

They are also, according to military experts, ineffective and counterproductive. Matthew Alexander, a former senior U.S. military interrogator in Iraq, has said that U.S. torture and Guantanamo were the number one recruiting tools bringing foreign fighters to Iraq, leading to the deaths of more U.S. military personnel.



*Amnesty International protests the Guantanamo Bay Detention Center in Peru, 2008.*

Tragically, the U.S. government turned its back on the most effective way to gather intelligence and prosecute those responsible for the September 11th attacks. The U.S. should have followed its own *rule of law*. (See box below.) The

## Guantanamo Bay's Peculiar History

The U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba was established in 1898 when the U.S. took control of Cuba from Spain at the end of the Spanish-American War.

The U.S. maintained the base even after it severed relations with the country



following the Cuban Revolution.

Toward the end of the 20th century, the base was used as a detention center for Cuban and Haitian refugees, until the camp was declared unconstitutional by a U.S. District Court judge in 1993.

Since early 2002, the U.S. has used its naval base at Guantanamo as a prison camp for detainees first from Afghanistan and later from Iraq. The prison camp has been widely criticized by members of the international community for mistreating inmates and holding them without trial.

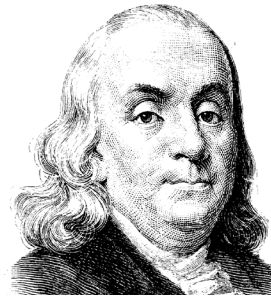
**Source:** Adapted from <[www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)>.

U.S. system of justice is strong and well established. Standard law enforcement techniques and fair trials in U.S. federal court could have brought justice.

Following our own rule of law would show the strength of the United States. Justice is the true counter to terrorism. Even today, the U.S. government is holding thousands of people without charge or fair trial at Guantanamo and other prisons and has refused to hold all those responsible for torture and abuse to account.

It's up to us to demand that the U.S. government change course and uphold human rights and the rule of law. Please take action by supporting September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows' Rule of Law Campaign and Amnesty International's Security with Human Rights Campaign. (See page 54 for more resources.)

*Zeke Johnson is a member of Amnesty International.*



**Anyone who trades liberty for security deserves neither liberty nor security.**

*Benjamin Franklin was one of the Founding Fathers of the United States. Read about the Patriot Act and trade-offs between liberty and security on pp. 44-45.*

**The Norwegian response to violence is more democracy, more openness, and greater political participation.**



*Jens Stoltenberg is the Prime Minister of Norway. On July 22, 2011, a right-wing anti-Muslim terrorist killed 90 people at a youth camp in Norway.*

## Rule of Law, Security, and Freedom

**“Rule of law means** that no individual...stands above law. Democratic governments exercise authority by way of law and are themselves subject to law's constraints. Laws should express the will of the people... Citizens in democracies are willing to obey the laws of society, then, because they are submitting to their own rules and regulations. Justice is best achieved when the laws are established by the very people who must obey them.”

**Source:** U.S. State Department <[usinfo.org/enus/government/overview/law.html](http://usinfo.org/enus/government/overview/law.html)>

**Read about the “rule of law” above.** What do you think? Should the U.S. follow our own laws and international laws when seeking justice for the crimes of 9/11?

**Consider the quote by Ben Franklin.** How do you think we can we make ourselves secure and keep our freedoms?

**Read the quote by Jens Stoltenberg.** Why would a country respond to violence this way?

**Watch this 5-minute video:** “Cost of 9/11 & its Impact on Rule of Law” on youtube.

# Costly but Appropriate Steps:

## How the U.S. Responded to the 9/11 Terrorist Attacks

Terry Clark

After the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, the U.S. government took the necessary steps to keep Americans safe. The president declared a war on terror, and the military invaded Afghanistan. To stop terrorist attacks at home, Congress created the Department of Homeland Security and passed the USA Patriot Act. These measures have a high

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**One of the first things that the U.S. government did immediately after 9/11 was to declare war on terrorism.**

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price, but they have been necessary.

One of the first things that the U.S. government did immediately after 9/11 was to declare war on terrorism. The president vowed to hunt down and eliminate all forms of

terrorism at home and abroad. In October 2001, the U.S. military invaded Afghanistan because Osama bin Laden was supposed to be hiding there. He was finally captured in Pakistan in May 2010.

To combat terrorism at home, Congress created the Department of Homeland Security. Its main job is to ensure that no further attacks occur on U.S. soil. For example, they helped organize the “If you see something, say something” campaign. This campaign reminds people to report suspi-



*The Department of Homeland Security uses unmanned drones to patrol borders.*

cious activities. The Department of Homeland Security also has a cyber-security division that tracks criminal activity that might happen over the Internet. To date there have been no further attacks on the United States.

The most controversial response to September 11, 2001 has been the USA Patriot Act. The Patriot Act is an acronym for Providing Appropriate Tools to Interrupt and Obstruct Terrorism. This act greatly expands the government’s power to monitor citizens, access information, and guard the nation’s borders. Some people believe that the act is unconstitutional because it allows the suspected terrorists and citizens to be subjected to no-knock warrants and extensive wiretapping. But I believe extreme measures are needed under these extreme circumstances.

The U.S. government took the appropriate steps to ensure safety after 9/11. Although the steps have been costly in human lives and freedoms, these measures have prevented further attacks on United States soil, as well as interrupted terrorist plans overseas.

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**The U.S. government took the appropriate steps to ensure safety after 9/11.**

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### What Do You Think?

**Compare this essay with the one by Chris Holmes on p. 51.**

**Write your own 5-paragraph essay discussing the direction that U.S. foreign and domestic policy has taken since 9/11.**

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*Terry Clark is a student at the Fort Smith Adult Education Center in Fort Smith, AR.*

# War: A Chisel for Carving Out Peace?

Chris Holmes

The great Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., once wrote, "Wars are poor chisels for carving out peaceful tomorrows." Wars have many consequences. People lose their lives, billions of dollars are wasted, and each side blames the other.

The worst consequence of war is that many lives are lost and families are destroyed. Wives

**Wars do not chisel a peaceful tomorrow, but instead, wreck havoc and mayhem.**

lose their husbands, children lose their parents, and parents lose their children. Many people experience the emotional trauma of losing a loved one. Soldiers

experience the trauma of losing limbs or of losing their fellow soldiers. They experience the nightmare of killing others.

In addition to all this death and destruction, wars are expensive. The United States spends billions of dollars each year on weapons and technology for fighting wars. Meanwhile, our country goes further into debt and our domestic programs are cut. And what about the countries we are bombing? Who will pay for them to rebuild?

Lastly, there is the blame game. One country blames the other for broken promises. Our own citizens blame the president or Congress for not bringing peace. The Democrats and the Republicans blame one another for taking the country down the wrong path. Some people become so disgruntled and frustrated that they even blame the Good Lord Himself. With everyone pointing the finger at someone else, no one takes responsibility for their role. Wars push us into corners and make it harder for us to resolve our differences.

"War, what is it good for?" asked the singer Edwin Starr in his 1969 song. And then he answered: "Absolutely nothing." Wars do not chisel peaceful tomorrows, but instead, they wreak havoc and mayhem. Loved ones die, billions of dollars are spent on destruction, and each side blames the other for the lack of peace. When what we are looking for is peaceful tomorrows, wars only remind us of our painful yesterdays.



Chris Holmes is a student at the Fort Smith Adult Education Center in Fort Smith, AR.

## War: What is it Good For?

by Edwin Starr

War, I despise  
Cause it means destruction of innocent lives  
War means tears in thousands of mothers' eyes  
When their sons go out to fight  
And lose their lives

War ain't nothing but a heartbreaker  
Friend only to the undertaker ...

They say we must fight to keep our freedom  
But Lord, there's just got to be a better way ...

## Using Metaphor

Try writing your own version of the quote by Martin Luther King, Jr. Replace "poor" with a positive word (such as "good" or "effective"). Replace "Wars" with a (singular) word of your choice:

"\_\_\_\_\_ is a(n) \_\_\_\_\_  
chisel for carving out peaceful tomorrows."



A chisel is a tool used by woodworkers.

# What is Terrorism?

## A Lesson Plan

*Cynthia Peters*

### Share What You Know about Terrorism

- What type of person or group usually commits terrorist acts?
- What kind of person is usually the victim of a terrorist act? Military personnel or civilians?
- Is a terrorist act different from similar acts committed during war? If so, how?

### Dictionary Definitions:

- terrorism: The systematic use of terror, especially as a means of coercion
- terror: a feeling of intense fear
- coercion: to make something happen by force or threat

### Consider the Following Five Examples of Violent Acts:

- Discuss them using the questions in the box on the next page as a guide.

#### Oklahoma City, OK



**1.** In 1995, Timothy McVeigh set off a bomb in front of a federal building in Oklahoma City. The explosion killed 168 people and injured 450. Many of the dead were children and babies, who were in a day care on the second floor. McVeigh was angry at the U.S. federal government for various reasons. He believed gun laws were too strict. He believed the government took too much in taxes. He wanted revenge against the U.S. government for the FBI's killing of 76 people in Waco, Texas.

#### Baghdad, Iraq



**2.** In 1993, President Clinton ordered the bombing of Iraq's "Intelligence Headquarters" in Baghdad. He said it was a necessary retaliation for an alleged plot to kill George H. Bush when he had visited Kuwait. Some of the bombs missed their target and landed in a residential neighborhood, killing eight civilians and injuring 12 more.

## New York City



**3.** On September 11, 2001, nineteen Al Qaeda members boarded four planes and managed to crash three of them into key buildings in the United States, killing about 3000 people. The fourth plane crashed into a field in Pennsylvania. Al Qaeda was angry at the United States for its role in the Middle East. Their goal is for governments in the Middle East to run under Islamic religious law.

## Marion, IN



**5.** From 1882 to 1968 in the United States, there were more than 3500 documented cases of white people lynching black people. The white people who did the lynching believed that the black person had committed some crime, but they did not wait for the case to go to court. They took “justice” in their own hands and killed the black person by hanging, shooting, or burning him or her.

## South Africa



**4.** In the 1970s and 1980s in South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC) organized to fight against the white power structure, which kept black people in a constant state of poverty and disenfranchisement. To weaken the white power structure and to gain support for their cause, the military wing of the ANC bombed military and industrial targets. Possibly dozens of civilians were killed.

### Discussion Questions

**Which of the above** do you think are examples of terrorism? Why?

**What do the above examples** have in common? How are they different?

**There is a saying** that “One person’s terrorist is another person’s freedom fighter.” Can you imagine how any of the examples listed above could be considered the actions of a freedom fighter?

**A judge at the International Court of Justice** said that the word “terrorism” has no legal meaning. It is just the word you use to describe the people you disagree with. What do you think of her remarks?

**Try writing your own definition of terrorism.** Compare it with others.

# Resources for Action and Reflection

*You read about issues that matter to you. You hear about others taking steps to create change. But it might be hard to imagine taking steps yourself. Where do you begin? Take your time. Take small steps. Join with others. The process for creating change has four basic steps: **1. Learn. 2. Act. 3. Reflect. 4.** And then repeat the cycle. Ordinary people create change through patient, steady, long-term organizing.*

## Learn and Share

Pick a story or video and discuss it with others or write about it. How did the person in the story turn their grief into a step toward peace?

- [www.peacefultomorrow.org](http://www.peacefultomorrow.org)
- <http://storycorps.org/listen/stories/category/september-11>

## Find More Resources for Learning

Visit these websites for content and lessons to increase your understanding.

- <http://911digitalarchive.org>
- [www.annenbergclassroom.org](http://www.annenbergclassroom.org)
- [http://constitutioncenter.org/ncc\\_edu\\_Classroom\\_Resources.aspx](http://constitutioncenter.org/ncc_edu_Classroom_Resources.aspx)
- [www.facinghistory.org](http://www.facinghistory.org)
- <http://rethinkingschools.org>
- [www.tanenbaum.org](http://www.tanenbaum.org)

## Protect Yourself and Others

Find information about public health issues related to 9/11 as well as campaigns for security and human rights.

- [www.nyc.gov/9-11healthinfo](http://www.nyc.gov/9-11healthinfo)
- [www.911families.org/health.html](http://www.911families.org/health.html)
- Amnesty International's Security with Human Rights Campaign: [www.facebook.com/swhrcampaign](http://www.facebook.com/swhrcampaign)
- [www.jurorsforjustice.org](http://www.jurorsforjustice.org)

## Join Peaceful Tomorrows

Be a supporter, participate in their actions, and receive e-mail alerts. Visit [www.peacefultomorrow.org](http://www.peacefultomorrow.org).

## Find Others Who are Seeking Reconciliation, Justice, and an End to Discrimination

- <http://prepareny.ning.com>
- <http://restorativejustice.org>
- <http://theforgivenessproject.com>

## Organize an Event in your Community

- Invite a member of Peaceful Tomorrows to speak at your program or in your community. Contact: 212-598-0970 or [www.peacefultomorrow.org](http://www.peacefultomorrow.org).
- Host a documentary viewing at your school or home. Find resources through your library or [www.amnestyusa.org/resources/educators/film-curriculum-guides](http://www.amnestyusa.org/resources/educators/film-curriculum-guides).

## Volunteer/Serve

- <http://911day.org>
- [www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org)
- [www.serve.gov](http://www.serve.gov)

## Join an Organization

- Visit this site to look for an organization that appeals to you: [www.betterworldhandbook.com/action10\(orgs\).html](http://www.betterworldhandbook.com/action10(orgs).html).
- Talk to your neighbors to find out about local organizations.

## Make your Government Work for You

- Support a U.S. Department of Peace at [www.thepeacealliance.org](http://www.thepeacealliance.org).
- Write or call elected representatives to show support or concern for policies. Find them at: [www.statelocalgov.net](http://www.statelocalgov.net).

**SAVE THE DATE!**

November 14-15, 2011  
(with a pre-conference on Nov. 13)

The fifth national conference on Effective Transition in Adult Education will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Providence, RI.



The two-day conference will focus on strategies and promising practices that help adult learners succeed in postsecondary education and training. Speakers include: Dr. Brenda Dann-Messier, U.S. Dept. of Education; Jennifer Hahn, "Communications for Change"; and Deejo Jibril, Community Learning Center's Bridge-to-College graduate.

Email us at [nctn@worlded.org](mailto:nctn@worlded.org) if you have any questions. Look for more information at [www.collegetransition.org](http://www.collegetransition.org). Sponsored by the National College Transition Network at World Education.

## Through the Lens of Social Justice:

**Using *The Change Agent*  
in Adult Education**

**Edited by Andy Nash**

*Are you looking for  
ways to...*

- explore social justice themes,
- build skills, and
- address student goals?

Here's a resource that will help you bring popular education and social analysis into the contemporary adult education classroom.

For ESOL, ABE, and GED practitioners, this book provides specific strategies for using articles and lessons that help students connect to the issues, analyze the issues, and take action.



**To order your copy**, contact 617-482-9485 or [changeagent@world-ed.org](mailto:changeagent@world-ed.org) or [www.nelrc.org/publications](http://www.nelrc.org/publications). 192 pages, \$18 (incl. shipping), published by NELRC/World Education.

# Change Agent CALL FOR ARTICLES

## THEME: Youth in ABE

With more and more young people (ages 16-24) in ABE, dynamics are shifting in the classroom and in programs. Teachers are working not only across ethnic and language lines, but also across generational lines. Students both benefit from the multi-age classroom and struggle to be understood by sometimes much younger or much older generations.

### SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

If you are a teacher/tutor/program staff for multi-generational learners:

- o What are some strategies for building community in the multi-age classroom?
- o Share your experiences in a multi-generational classroom. What are some of the advantages? Disadvantages?
- o Have you made adjustments in your teaching style to better reach young people? If so, what sort?
- o Has youth presence in your classroom influenced your use of technology or social media?

If you are a young person in ABE:

- o How is your experience in ABE different from regular high school?
- o What made you decide to leave regular high school?
- o Are your educational needs getting met in ABE? What would you need more of or less of to improve your experience and meet your goals?
- o Share your experiences in a multi-generational classroom. What are some of the advantages? Disadvantages?

If you are not a youth (i.e., 25 or over) in ABE:

- o Share your experiences in a multi-generational classroom. What are some of the advantages? Disadvantages?
- o How can older people support younger people? What can society do to give young people the educational opportunities they seek?

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS:** November 4, 2011. Please submit illustrations, cartoons, and graphics on this theme too! The complete "call for articles" is at [www.nelrc.org/changeagent](http://www.nelrc.org/changeagent).



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