

Dear Friends and Family,

My name is Lee Ielpi, Ret. FF Rescue 2, father of FF Jonathan Ielpi, Squad 288, lost on 9-11-01, and FF Brendan, L157.

The Tribute Center, the interim visitors center created by the September 11<sup>th</sup> Families Association, is expanding its recruitment of volunteers to serve as guides at the World Trade Center site.

The Tribute Center, located next to the L10/E10 Fire House on Liberty Street, is set to open in early summer, and will tell the story of September 11, 2001 and February 26, 1993 and pay tribute to our loved ones. Tribute is a place for those who want to take part in telling the story in a real first-hand, unforgettable way.

Part of our goal is to give guided walking tours to the thousands of people that come to the World Trade Center site every day. The families are in a unique position to make this the most real, touching, and informative visitor experience in the nation. Tribute gives me an opportunity to talk about my son Jonathan every day.

Every Tribute tour is led by someone who was deeply affected by the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks -- people who lost loved ones, rescue workers, many of whom spent months searching, volunteers who came by the tens of thousands, survivors of the attacks, and lower Manhattan residents and workers. These are the people we call the 9/11 COMMUNITY. Besides a tour leader, each tour has a Support Person whose sole responsibility is to support the Tour Leader and keep the group together. The volunteers are a wonderful group of people who are dedicated to sharing their experience and educating visitors. Every one of them has a story to tell, AND SO DO YOU. WE NEED YOUR INVOLVEMENT.

One volunteer, Iris Holohan, mother of Firefighter Thomas P. Holohan Engine 6, joined because "The volunteer program keeps the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> real. Not just dry facts people read about. It is truly allowing me to work through my own feelings of helplessness. One of the best parts of this program is looking into the eyes of those who want to know more about that day and what followed."

Rosemary Cain, mother of Firefighter George Cain Ladder 7, who has been a volunteer since the program started says, "I find the whole experience very therapeutic. It gives me a way of sharing my story about George, which is what means the most to me and what I feel most family members want. We want to make sure our loved ones are never forgotten! It also gives us a chance to teach people the facts about that day and show them where the towers were and then take them, step by step, through my own experience of September 11<sup>th</sup> to today. I find that the visitors are very respectful and interested in hearing our personal stories, and I've made such wonderful new friends!"

You don't have to be the best public speaker or an animated storyteller. By talking about the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, and talking about your loved one, you will bring their lives and your experiences to a new audience. This is a true way to make sure that people from around the world will "NEVER FORGET."

This is a very important role with lots of meaning behind it, and you get to interact with visitors from around the world. I hope you will join me by becoming a Tribute Center volunteer.

All of the volunteers go through a training program that has been put together by experts in the visitor and museum field as well as with consulting psychologists. There are also regular debriefings with all volunteers so we can discuss the visitor questions, impressions, and issues. The volunteers learn from each other and are building this program together.

The principle objectives of training are:

- To provide volunteers with factual information about the history of the WTC bombing on February 26, 1993, the attacks on September 11, 2001 at the Pentagon, Shanksville, PA and at the WTC site, past, present, and future, so they give accurate and consistent information to visitors;
- To assist volunteers in learning and/or increasing public speaking skills so they effectively and confidently interact with the public, whatever their volunteer assignment, but especially if they are presenters;
- To help volunteers define their own stories in relation to September 11<sup>th</sup> and determine what is appropriate to share;
- To provide volunteers with an understanding of how people learn and how to ensure that their presentation is effective for individuals with different learning styles.
- To help the volunteers understand the feelings and needs of the visitor and to help them manage their own feelings and memories as they retell their stories to a new audience.

Our next three trainings are scheduled for the following weekends:

**March 25<sup>th</sup> 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm**  
**March 26<sup>th</sup> 9:30 am – 4:30 pm**

**April 21<sup>st</sup> 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm**  
**April 22<sup>nd</sup> 9:30 am – 4:30pm**

**May 19<sup>th</sup> 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm**  
**May 20<sup>th</sup> 9:30 am – 4:30 pm**

Trained guides are asked to commit to volunteering for a four to five hour time slot, twice a month. During that time, he or she will lead one tour and be the support person on another tour. Volunteers may expect to participate in ongoing training and staff development sessions for an additional hour or two a month.

I hope all of this information is helpful to you. Please let me know if I can be of assistance. My e-mail is [lielpi@911families.org](mailto:lielpi@911families.org)

If you are interested in the program and if you would like an application, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Rachael Grygorcewicz at [RachaelG@tributenyc.org](mailto:RachaelG@tributenyc.org) or at 212-422-3522.

Thank You,



Lee Ielpi  
Vice President  
September 11<sup>th</sup> Families Association