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NYC Archives Honors 25 Years of 9/11 History With Transcription Project Preserving New Yorkers' Handwritten Memorial Messages

On Day of Service, DORIS invites New Yorkers to help preserve the personal stories and messages inscribed on wooden support beams in the aftermath of September 11th

Throughout the month, LinkNYC kiosks will display children's letters and artwork sent to first responders and preserved in the Municipal Archives

New York – As the city marks 25 years since September 11, 2001, Department of Records & Information Services (DORIS) Commissioner Shawn(ta) Cruz-Smith invites New Yorkers to take part in an online transcription project preserving thousands of heartfelt messages family members and loved ones handwrote onto 56 wooden support beams that once surrounded temporary reflecting pools near the World Trade Center site.

The memorial messages were collected and photographed by the Municipal Archives, and the messages they bear contain deeply personal expressions of remembrance, love and loss. By transcribing these messages, New Yorkers can help preserve these important historical records and make them accessible and searchable for researchers, families and future generations.

“As we mark 25 years since the horrific terror attacks of September 11, 2001, we carry a responsibility to preserve the stories of the New Yorkers who showed extraordinary courage, compassion and solidarity in the face of unimaginable loss,” said **Mayor Mamdani**. “This anniversary is a time to remember and to serve. I encourage New Yorkers to honor the day through acts of service and to join this transcription project, helping ensure that the handwritten messages left on the memorial wood beams are preserved in our Municipal Archives for generations to come.”

“Twenty-five years later, the record of September 11th is not only about what happened that day,” said **DORIS Commissioner Smith-Cruz**. “It is also about what people wrote, drew, saved and carried forward in the years that followed. Preserving those records gives future generations the opportunity to encounter this history through the voices of the people who lived it.”

“By designating September 11 as a Day of Service and Remembrance, we remember those we lost and carry forward the spirit that defined our City in its darkest hours.

Service was the legacy of those who answered the call on September 11, 2001, and those who have died since. The greatest tribute we can pay them is to continue serving one another with compassion, courage, and a shared commitment to building a stronger New York,” said **Fire Commissioner Lillian Bonsignore**.

This virtual transcription event will take place asynchronously on [From the Page](#) beginning 8 a.m. on September 11. Volunteers should be comfortable reading cursive handwriting, as the messages are handwritten and vary in legibility. Patience, attention to detail, and a commitment to accurately transcribing each message as written are the primary skills needed. No prior transcription or archival experience is required. Individuals interested can RSVP by visiting [Messages of Memory: Transcribing Words of Remembrance on 9/11](#).

In addition to this week’s transcription event, DORIS will display children’s letters and artwork preserved in the Municipal Archives on LinkNYC kiosks across the city throughout the month of September.

Sent to City officials by schoolchildren from classrooms across the country following the attacks, the handwritten letters offered encouragement and gratitude to New York City’s first responders and residents.

Twenty-five years later, these messages provide a window into how children experienced and understood September 11th and how people across the country reached out to New York in its aftermath.

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About the NYC Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS):
Established in 1977, the NYC Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS) preserves and provides public access to historical and contemporary records and information about New York City government. We operate the Municipal Archives, the Municipal Library, and the Records Center. Learn more at <https://www.nyc.gov/site/records/index.page>.

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