

Officers lost on 9/11 remembered by community

By Maciej Wroblewski

Law enforcement officers and community residents gathered together on Monday, September 11 for various memorial services around the city to remember their coworkers, friends, neighbors and all men and women who died in the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

At 8:47 a.m., exactly five years after the first plane crashed into the north tower of World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, the names of the 23 police officers who lost their lives at the site were read out during the 13th Precinct annual World Trade Center memorial service in front of the station house on East 21st Street. The memorial services were followed with a breakfast for those who attended.

This year as in the past a memorial garden was planted by the Gramercy Park Block Association under the guidance of GPBA board member Kathleen Scupp.

"During the first year after the World Trade Center disaster we planted this garden with the help of Epiphany School children and since then we have been planting it two times a year. We will continue to do so to honor the memory of those who were lost," said Arlene Harrison, president of the Gramercy Park Block Association. "This is truly a day of mourning for our community who lost so many and it is our intention to never forget them," she added.

The ceremony was organized by the 13th Precinct. Members of the Gramercy Park Block Association helped to distribute information about the event.

The solemn memorial was attended by police officers from the precinct and Emergency Service Truck 1 and residents of the community, many of whom returned later to attend a service of remembrance at the Calvary Church.

Following the memorial ceremonies, as part of an annual process to pay tribute to the neighborhood's Emergency Service Squad 1 uniformed police personnel who were down at World Trade Center for 8 1/2 months during the recovery effort, GPBA member Robert Opatrny once again cooked dinner for the squad.

"My personal mission for the past four years has been our community's support for the work of Claire Haaga and her project Olive ReLeaf to get healthcare for our uniformed personnel," said Harrison. "In our pilot project with the Emergency Service Squad 1 and the 13th Precinct, 95 percent of them tested positive for excessively high levels of toxic lead and mercury in their systems."

Harrison added, "This is the only treatment program in all of New York City that is not just monitoring and tracking. It is the only one actually focusing on toxicity and underlying health problems related to the toxic exposure at ground zero in the months after 9/11. That is the least we can do for these brave men and women who served us so valiantly during that time."

On September 11, 2001, the neighborhood lost Police Officers Moira Smith and Robert Fazio of the 13th Precinct, Brian McDonnell of Emergency Service Truck 1, Glen Pettit from the Police Academy on 20th Street, Transit Officers Mark Ellis and Ramon Suarez, and Emergency Medical Technician David Mark Sullins from Cabrini Medical Center on 19th Street.

Ladder Company 3 on 13th Street lost Captain Patrick Brown, Lieutenant Kevin Donnelly and firefighters Michael Carroll, James Coyle, Gerard Dewan, Jeffrey Giordano, Joseph Maloney, John McAvoy, Timothy McSweeney, Joseph Ogren and Steven Olsen.

Engine 16/Ladder Company 7 on 29th Street lost Captain Vernon Richard and firefighters George Cain, Robert Foti, Charles Mendez, Richard Muldowney and Vincent Princiotta.

Members of Engine 5 on 14th Street lost their brother Manuel Delvalle.

The neighborhood also lost many of its neighbors, including Captain Terry Hatten from Rescue 1, Captain William Burke Jr. from Engine 21, Jim Paul of 34 Gramercy Park, professional photographer Bill Biggart of 26 Gramercy Park and Davin Peterson whose mom lives at 44 Gramercy Park.



Community Affairs Police Officer Ray Dorrian honoring the memory of Police Officer Moira Smith.



Neighborhood residents paying their respects



Community Affairs Police Officer Maureen McTigue and Inspector Michael J. McEnroy



Relatives and friends descending into the 16-acre Ground Zero site



Memorial Garden planted by the Gramercy Park Block Association surrounded by flowers brought by neighbors



Police Officer Anna Milan and the Auxiliary officers of the 13th Precinct



Reading the names of police officers who perished on 9/11



Thousands gather at the World Trade Center reflecting pool to honor the memory of those they lost



Emergency Service Squad 1 Police Officers John Kenny, Keith Connelly, with Arlene Harrison, president of the Gramercy Park Block Association and Inspector Michael J. McEnroy, commanding officer of the 13th Precinct