

Family Newsletter

August 2005

The Massachusetts 9/11 Fund



Commemoration 2005

It's a very special opportunity for the Board and Staff of the Massachusetts 9/11 Fund to be putting together the commemorative events and ceremonies for this year. Our committee, chaired by Mary Kakas, includes family and board members, and staff.

We want to be sure that everyone on our contact list receives an invitation in the mail. If you have not received one, it is because we have inadvertently left your contact information in an incomplete state. Please let us know immediately so we can correct our database, and most importantly, issue you an invitation promptly. For those of you who attended the Remembrance Book Distribution, we have included another copy of the invitation in the event you might have misplaced it during the evening.

If there are family members or close friends that you would like to add to our contact list, please send us the information and we will immediately send them an invitation.

The commemoration information has been posted on <http://www.massfund.org/home.html> and numerous other websites.

We are involving many people in the commemoration, seeking individuals who would like to read names aloud, striving to include a variety of folks, representing all of the familial and friend connections of all generations, particularly being sure to involve young people – whether they be children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, siblings. Let us know of your interest if you have not already done so as we have a few openings left for readers.

Sunday, September 11, 2005

8:30 am

Flag Lowering and Moment of Silence

The State House Lawn

Open to the public

10:00 am

Commemoration Program*

The House Chamber
Massachusetts State House

Open to the public

10:30 am

Madeline Amy Sweeney Award for Civilian Bravery*

The House Chamber
Massachusetts State House

Open to the public

11:30 am

Private Luncheon

Ritz Carlton Hotel
Arlington Street

Families only
RSVP ONLY

*There will not be a break between these two events. Attendees are respectfully requested to take their seats in time for the 10:00 am ceremony and remain through the conclusion of the second.

Family visits to the Contemplative Garden at your leisure are welcome from 8:30 am to sunset in The Boston Public Garden

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### Also In this issue:

**The Remembrance Book; Madeline Amy Sweeney Award for Civilian Bravery; Update on Moussaoui Trial Sentencing Phase; Upcoming Good Grief Programs; Opportunities for Family Involvement; Welcome to Erica Cabag; Available Red Cross Services**

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#### In memoriam

Loretta W. Kowal

#### **Featured Article:**

**Opportunity for Increased Family Involvement - pages four to five**

## Upcoming Events

of

September 11, 2005

Commemorative activities of  
the MA 9/11 Fund  
Massachusetts State House  
Boston, MA

8:30 am

Flag Lowering and Moment of  
Silence

10:00 am

Commemoration Program

10:30 am

Madeline Amy Sweeney  
Award for Civilian Bravery

11:30 am

Family Luncheon

## Distribution of 'we remember' - a retrospective

The distribution ceremony was well attended and it was lovely to see so many of you there, sharing memories, experiences, thoughts, and embraces. Your hard work has produced such a wonderful tribute to those on the pages within. Heartfelt words were spoken by several members of our community that evening at the JFK Presidential Library, in making presentations of these special books to the guests of honor in attendance - Congressman Marty Meehan, designers Alyn Carlson-Webster and Mary Avery, Deborah Rivlin, President Faith Arter, President Emeritus Eric MacLeish, board members in attendance Peter Dimond, Larry Klaff and Dan Bakinowski, Remembrance Project Chair Margaret "Peg" Ogonoswki, and the Lt. Colonels Van Brundt of the Salvation Army. Several volunteers made the evening flow smoothly, including Mollie Weinberg and Allison Bakinowski, and members of Catholic Charities: Pat Dunn, Erin Heenan, Judy Hodge and Tom Pearson.

The staff of the Presidential Library did a lovely job of providing a special and welcoming environment for us, complemented by lovely refreshments provided by Gourmet Caterers and music by Felice Pomeranz's 'Gilded Harps'.

We will be mailing out copies of the full two-volume set to those of you who had developed layouts of your loved one(s) but were unable to attend. If you would like to get them sooner, you can contact us to set up a time to bring them to you on the street level of our downtown Chinatown offices so you would not have to find a parking space. An order form is provided in this newsletter to request additional copies of the entire book or just the individual layouts together with the introductory book. There has been a delay in mailing these out due to the necessity of identifying a suitable container that is both light in weight and strong enough to protect the volumes.

## "we remember" - the next chapter

We'd like to be sure that the additional ones of you who would also like to participate now can somehow be included. For some family members, the distribution of "we remember" was difficult, in that there were some families and friends who were disappointed that their loved one(s) were not included. Some families had certainly elected, quite decisively, to not participate. Others did not know they could participate. A few of you have expressed that you had sent in materials, but that the materials were not included. Some of those who had decided initially not to participate are now thinking that they would like the opportunity to do so.

We would like to solicit interest from those whose loved one(s) were not included in the book, to participate in developing layouts for these individuals. Our plan is to have these families working together; much like many of you did originally. You would work with our designers to produce the layouts. We would take some of our existing copies, open the binding, and insert the additional pages where they would belong in alphabetical order. Although we have no financial capability to unbind and then re-bind all of the copies already provided, and the additional ones being purchased, the families who now participate would have their loved one(s) included in their personal copies.

Those of you amongst the original 76 families whose layouts were published who would like to participate in this effort as a support to those who will be going through the process, please let me know. You have a great perspective to provide to your fellow family members and their friends. After all, the wonderful and important experiences you've had together - that I continue to hear from so many of you - are the value you each have to each other. Brought together from so many disparate places - with a common bond of shared tragedy. And you have accomplished so much because of your shared strength.

Let us know whether you would like to participate in developing a layout for your loved one(s) for inclusion in your own copies of "we remember", or if you would like to help families given your experiences in creating one of the existing pages.

## Staff Contact Information

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## Madeline Amy Sweeney Award for Civilian Bravery

The committee selecting the 2005 recipients of this award is meeting August 25, 2005 to make the final recommendations to the Office of the Governor of Massachusetts. In support of the goal of identifying next year's nominees, we would like to remind you of the background. In this way, we hope you will assist us in identifying friends and neighbors of yours in the coming year, who would best exemplify the criteria as presented here.

For 14 years, Amy Sweeney was an American Airlines flight attendant. She lived in Acton, Massachusetts with her husband, Michael Sweeney, and their two small children. On September 11, 2001 Amy Sweeney was working on American Airlines Flight 11, the first airplane hijacked. Before the plane hit the tower, Amy Sweeney had the courage and bravery to contact the airline's ground services crew to convey critical information about the five hijackers and their fatal actions on the plane that morning. It is for Amy Sweeney's heroism, and the heroism and brave spirit of so many of the victims on September 11, 2001, that this award was created.

Recipients of the "Madeline Amy Sweeney Award for Civilian Bravery" must demonstrate exceptional bravery, without regard for personal safety, in an effort to save the life or lives of another or others in actual imminent danger.

Nomination applications are available online - [www.amysweeneyaward.org](http://www.amysweeneyaward.org) or [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov) or at the Executive Office of Public Safety, One Ashburton Place, Suite 2133, Boston 02108. Next year's award will recognize acts performed between July 15, 2005 and July 15, 2006.

## Moussaoui Trial

As we wrote in our last newsletter, the sentencing trial for Zacarias Moussaoui is scheduled to begin in early 2006 in Virginia. The Court has not yet ruled on whether or not Boston will be designated as a closed circuit TV viewing site for this trial. At the request of several family members, the Fund has explored some other resources available for those with an interest in this proceeding.

As you may know, Mr. Moussaoui is represented by the Office of Federal Public Defender of the Eastern District of Virginia, along with two other attorneys appointed by the Court. We have been informed by this office that his defense counsel has asked several trained specialists to assist with victim outreach in that case, in order to provide a bridge from victims to the defense team. In this way, those with questions for his defense counsel who might otherwise find it difficult to pose these questions are assured that these questions will be handled directly and compassionately by trained specialists. For more information about this victim outreach effort, please contact the Office of the Federal Public Defender directly through Ms. Mickell Branham, 810 Broadway, Suite 200, Nashville, TN 37203; (615) 736-5047 phone or (615) 736-5265 fax; or Diane Nealon at the Fund. Again, we remind everyone that the Fund has not taken a political stand about this trial, but rather, is simply committed to bringing our family members all the information we have about available resources.

## Commemoration 2005 - Special Assistance

If anyone requires special handicapped assistance to participate in any of the Fund's sponsored events at the 2005 Commemoration, please contact us as soon as possible so we can help you make these arrangements.

## Works in Process

**Scholarship America** - we have had some success in working with Scholarship America with regard to increasing the amount of scholarships that applicant families may receive. They have agreed to increase the amount of scholarships from 80% of demonstrated need to 85%. Some families have informed us that the awards they have received effective this Fall do appear to reflect a significant amount of scholarship support. We continue to work with Scholarship America to make additional progress in this area.

**Health Insurance** - Although it has taken a good amount of time to identify a cost-effective solution for families struggling with the cost of health insurance, and the pending loss of COBRA benefits for some, we expect to be able to report a final resolution in a few weeks. While optimistic, we do not want to raise artificial hopes. As soon as we understand what the alternatives are that we can offer, we will be in touch with all of you.

## How Do I Know the MA 9/11 Fund Is There for Me?

We encourage you to contact David, Diane or Erica by phone or email. We're interested in your feedback as to how we can be of assistance to you.

## Reminder – Help Available for Mental Health Treatment

Just a reminder that as we approach September 11<sup>th</sup>, there remain several resources available for mental health treatment:

The Red Cross, through the Mental Health Association of New York, has a 9/11 Mental Health and Substance Abuse Program which provides assistance for psychotherapy, support groups and psychiatric medications, among other interventions. A full description of their benefits and enrollment process can be obtained at: <http://www.9-11mentalhealth.org> or by contacting them directly at: 1-800-LIFENET (1-800-543-3638).

The Fund's Social Work Coordinator, Diane Nealon, maintains a list of local providers and support groups for Massachusetts families. In addition, the Fund is putting together its first educational workshop on mental health issues. If you would like to see a particular mental health issue addressed in these workshops, please do not hesitate to let Diane know.

## Join in Welcoming Ms. Erica Cabag

We are pleased to introduce Erica Cabag as our new Administrative Coordinator. She was chosen from a large pool of applicants (exceeding 100). Erica comes to us from Los Angeles where she worked as the Coordinator of Educational Access at the Shoah Foundation. New to Boston, Erica is very excited to join the organization and looks forward to meeting the Board and families. Please feel free to contact Erica at (617) 482-8153 or [erica.cabag@massfund.org](mailto:erica.cabag@massfund.org).

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Increased Roles for Families - A reminder . . . Please comment and/or volunteer

We have received a good amount of positive response indicating that there are those among you who would like to serve on the Family Advisory Committee (FAC) and/or the Board of Directors. There are a few weeks left to express your interest. We would like to be able to populate both the FAC and the family seats on the Board of Directors in the Fall, so please let us know of any interest you may have, as soon as you can, if you have not already done so. And now, - to the reminder:

The Board of Directors approved the following proposal for the expansion of the Family Advisory Committee and adding specific slots on the Board of Directors for family members.

The proposal has also been supported by the existing Family Advisory Committee, and the family members that attended the June 20 meeting of the Board and Families at which it was presented.

In this newsletter, we would like to open it up to the entire community of families and solicit thoughts as well as potential interest in becoming part of an expanded Family Advisory Committee, or to be considered for membership on the Board of Directors. You are encouraged to read and comment upon the proposal. Our plan is to develop a final plan and implement it for the Fall, 2005. The current proposal follows here:

It is essential that the Massachusetts 9/11 Fund, Inc. maintain and enhance ongoing communication with the families of the victims of the attacks in order to be responsive to the needs of the population as is both appropriate and possible. To do so, the following strategies are being proposed for feedback and evaluation by the current Family Advisory Committee, the Board of Directors, and the families themselves as individuals.

We believe the following to be true and important:

1. The role of the Family Advisory Committee (FAC) should be detailed, including its responsibilities and structure.

Increased Roles for Families - continued. . .

2. Provisions should be made to have as many as three family members serve in appropriate capacities on the Board of Directors allowing for the perspective(s) of our constituency to be present in all discussions.
3. The Executive Director of the fund shall maintain and enhance ongoing strong communication with the Family Advisory Committee as one method of attaining the goals of the fund as determined. Discussions should be summarized and generally distributed.
4. The FAC should retain the ability to directly address the Board, where necessary.
5. Meetings of the Board and families at large as currently constructed do not appear to provide what they were intended to accomplish. In both cases, these volunteer populations (board members and family members who venture out) are out in the evening for too many hours in a row, transportation has become an issue, and the strategy for the interaction is not always identified. It may well be that meeting times that would be best for most Board members may not work as well for most family members. Most importantly, the structures proposed in items 1-4 would address what the Board/Family meetings were designed to accomplish.

Recommendations to achieve these beliefs and priorities:

Define the Role of the FAC:

The Family Advisory Committee's (FAC) primary role should be to offer ongoing feedback to the professional staff of the organization to ensure that programs and services meet the interests and desires of the constituents. Where possible, this should be done in discussion, bringing in other families and individuals as would be productive. (For example, the FAC might call for a forum to open a family-wide discussion on a particular issue, rather than meet with the professional staff alone.) The FAC should be representative of the variety of family members in both familial relationship to the victims; in age; and in gender. [Specifically, widow(s), widower(s), parent(s), sibling(s), dependent(s); range of ages; male(s)/female(s)]

The FAC and the Nominating Committee of the Board should be responsible to identify a maximum of three individuals who will serve two-year terms on the board. Family members elected to the Board may not hold any office where they would need to recuse themselves from a general area in which the board must act. Such general areas include the budget, grants to families, and issues of fiduciary responsibility. Specifically, these offices include that of President, Vice President and Treasurer. Those family members elected to Board service are not eligible to serve as members of the FAC.

By providing three separate roles for family members: as "at-large" members of the constituency, FAC members, and Board members, the Fund should be able to maximize the forms and range of input as well as offering multiple structural ways for individuals and groups to offer their ideas. This avoids having a small number of folks in multiple roles, which might work against enabling a range of discussion.

Size of the FAC:

The FAC should be comprised of at least five members, and be as broadly representative of the families as possible to ensure that a balance of issues and priorities are both identified and presented in discussion with the Fund.

Elections of the FAC:

The FAC membership should be chosen from amongst those self-nominating for service. Unless that number exceeds twelve, elections need not be held. The President of the Board and the Executive Director may approach individuals from amongst the family members at large to consider serving on the FAC in the event there is either an insufficient number of family members self-identifying, or there are significant sub-groups not represented. In the 'worst case', elections would be held.

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