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Dan Fitzmaurice, left, holds a Sept. 11 remembrance flag designed by his mother and stepfather. With him is friend Earl Moore, principal of Meadow Lane Elementary School.

Pikeville man sees 9-11 flag as way to remember the dead

By PHYLLIS MOORE
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A Pikeville man hopes the country will adopt a flag commemorating Sept. 11, 2001.

Dan Fitzmaurice's mother and stepfather, Joanne and Stephen Galvin, designed the flag within days after the terrorist attacks. They live in Wolcott, N.Y., where Fitzmaurice lived before he moved to Pikeville a year ago.

"My stepfather saw the POW flag and that sparked him to go home and design a flag," Fitzmaurice said. On Sept. 26, 2001, the Galvins obtained a copyright on the design.

Each part of the flag is symbolic. The four interlocking stars are for each plane that crashed. The central black stripe represents sorrow, and the two blue stripes represent the dominant color in the state flags of New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia, where the planes went down.

Fitzmaurice went to New York City after the attacks to help with rescue efforts and cleanup. He later placed a flag on a remembrance site across the street from the Twin Towers. He has been working to get the word out about the ongoing relief effort and said the flag was created as a fund-raiser for victims' families.

He said his mother and stepfather travel around the country promoting the flag. They have been invited to Washington, D.C., where a

training center will be dedicated in the name of a man whose life was lost at the Pentagon. One of the remembrance flags will be raised there.

Fitzmaurice said the American Legion in New York state has also adopted it, and one is flying in Fredericksburg, Va., at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Several chambers of commerce have also adopted it.

"We also have an on-line petition if people want to adopt this," he said.

He said response has been phenomenal and his mother, who works for IBM in Rochester, spends every evening working on orders and the Web site.

Earl Moore, principal of Meadow Lane Elementary School, is a friend of Fitzmaurice. He said he did not know anyone personally who had died Sept. 11, but supports the effort for other reasons.

"I can go to a burial site if I need to," he said. "But these people can't. The flag is a memorial, a reminder of their loved one that was lost."

The first flag was sewn by a woman in Waterloo, N.Y., as a prototype. A company in South Carolina manufactures the flags. They are 3 feet by 7 feet and sell for \$40. There are also 4-inch-by-6-inch handheld sizes for \$5 each, and flag decals for \$2.50. Information on ordering flags or stickers is available from the Web site at www.911remembranceflag.com or by calling Fitzmaurice at 242-6111.