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Xerox People Remember September 11

We will observe the 10th anniversary of September 11 in different ways. There is no doubt it had a major impact on our lives. It did for three of our colleagues.

Two Xerox people who experienced the terror of September 11 firsthand were Paige Pantezzi, business development executive, and John Heatley, a Xerox Strategic Business Unit director, Texas Department of Information Resources. They were on the 24th floor of One World Trade Center working for their client, Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield, when the first jet hit.

Paige said the building was rocking violently back and forth and it felt like the tower was going to tip over.

When Paige got outdoors she saw the devastation. She also saw the plane hit the second tower. "Those images are still very vivid."

Paige chose to turn her grief into action, and decided to share her experience with others. She was among the first volunteers trained to lead tours of Ground Zero.

"I am able to tell people what I saw and felt that day as a survivor," she said. "This helps to connect with visitors who want to understand and appreciate this historic event with those who experienced it."

Paige remembers the tremendous support and generosity of people after the attacks, but feels it has diminished slightly.

"I realize things change over time, but I wish we were still as unified as we were 10 years ago."

Each anniversary is a time of reflection for Paige and an opportunity to be with her family.

"Life is very short. We need to make the most of each day because you never know what can happen," Paige explained.

John Witnessed a Spirit of Coming Together

When John finally managed to make it outside he looked up and saw the second plane go directly over him and hit tower two.

"It looked like someone shot a missile at the building."

Next came smoke and shards of glass and metal raining down. About 55 minutes later, John saw tower two collapse.

"It looked like a giant waterfall of black debris coming at me."

It was a day when John witnessed people in a crisis coming together to help each other.

"I saw people with asthma sharing inhalers, and individuals in stores throw out shoes to those needing them," John said.

He spends each anniversary at home with his family.

"I appreciate them even more. I'm thankful I was able to be there for my daughter's wedding and to enjoy three grandchildren. "That day changed my life," John stated. "It reminds you to appreciate the small things, and how random and precious life is."

A Symbolic Reminder

After September 11, people were looking for ways to help and show their support. Like many, Joanne Galvin, a global buyer for Xerox, and her late husband, Steve, had a strong desire to do something beyond making a donation.

Joanne and Steve were disheartened to hear two news commentators speak of the tragedy, relate it to Pearl Harbor, but not be able to recall the date of that attack. Shortly after this, they drove past a POW/MIA flag.

The idea came to them. Create a 9/11 National Remembrance Flag, an everlasting memory for the innocent lives lost, a way for others to show their support and use the proceeds to donate to various September 11 relief efforts. The flag design was drafted and a copyright was filed on September 25. Ten years later, over 3,000 flags have been sold around the world through a Web site they created.

Joanne will spend this anniversary attending several local ceremonies. She said, "We take everyday things for granted, and often forget how precious life is and how quickly it can be taken away."

The work on the flags requires long hours, but Joanne loves every minute of it.

"In some small way I feel I'm helping to make sure we never forget the innocent lives lost or the families they left behind."

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Joanne and Steve Galvin's 9-11 National Remembrance Flag. [This 2004 article](#) includes an explanation of the symbols and colors.