

# September 11, 2001 - A Day to Remember



Let every nation know,  
whether it wishes us well or  
ill, that we shall pay any  
price, bear any burden, meet  
any hardship, support any  
friend, oppose any foe,  
to assure the survival and  
success of liberty.  
*John Fitzgerald Kennedy*



# 5-Year Anniversary of the September 11 Attacks Reflections and Lessons from AR-CRT Members

## Lessons Learned from September 11, 2001 Family Assistance Centers - Then, Now and In the Future

The question is short: What worked? The answer is simple: The Family Assistance Center [FAC].

The NOVA FAC model was used in New Jersey after 9-11. Two lessons were learned: First, prepare your local jurisdiction to be independent because aid may not always be available. Second, the FAC allows those traumatized a feeling of security and normalcy in their lives.

The City of Conway applied the FAC model after Hurricane Katrina and was fully operational two days prior to the arrival of our Hurricane Katrina guests. While the FAC was based on the NOVA model, it was implemented under the Incident Command System. The Incident Command Center was located at the Conway Communications Center and was staffed by representatives working with the FAC. This allowed face-to-face contact to occur.

FACs can be adapted to any type of disaster if your community is willing to step up. Conway is blessed to have so many individuals and businesses that are willing to help.

The FAC became its own small town. Its infrastructure was run from the Communications Center under the ICS. Its process was handled at the intake center, guests were housed at the Don Owens Sports Complex, transportation needs were provided by churches, and the guests had their own shopping center which rivaled any shopping center in the area.

Learning from these lessons, we are now preparing a pandemic response which incorporates the FAC.



However, we are preparing on the possibility that even local volunteer response may be limited due to health concerns and that a hostile work environment may prevail. We are focusing on outdoor triage and security, again with the realization that the city work force may also be reduced. In all truthfulness it could be a y2k occurrence or as Captain Kirk would say "a no win scenario" in either case adapt and improvise.

Applying the Family Assistance Model to Future Disasters

*Submitted by:*

*Conway Fire Chief Bart Castleberry  
Faulkner County CRT*

*NOVA Basic CRT 1998*

*September 11, 2001 Deployment  
New Jersey  
Liberty State Park  
Family Assistance Center*

## Poem Written by NOVA Volunteer for the Memory Wall Shared by Jack Bell, Faulkner County CRT

I see them come with tears in their eyes so I can offer my ears and I hear their cries

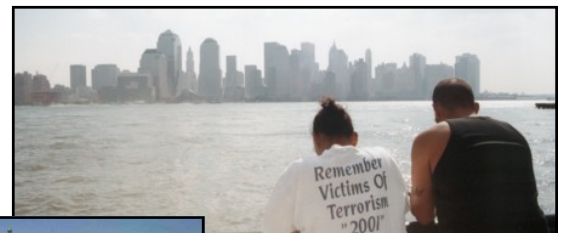
I offer my shoulders to help carry their sorrow

I offer my hands to help build their tomorrow

I've brought my body and left my home to come help people I've never known

To bring them back out of their pain

This I will do again and again



## September 11th - Remembered

Reflecting on the incident, the two things that really remain strongly on my mind are the level of devastation, human and material, and the powerful closeness of the team that developed almost immediately. Seeing my fellow team members at state trainings and meetings is still something I look forward to. I have returned to New York and visited both Liberty State Park and Ground Zero. That visit closed out the experience for me and I don't feel any need to do more to address the powerful experience of 9/11. However, if the team ever wanted to return to New York I wouldn't hesitate to visit it again with them. What we mean to each other will remain with us for the rest of our lives.

Msgr. Jack Harris, September 11th - Team Leader  
Craighead County CRT and SEACRT  
New Jersey Family Assistance Center Deployment

On the way to New York and after being assigned the first victim of any Arkansas all I thought was --The whole world is still watching this, please God don't let me screw up.

Dennis Graham  
Harrisburg School Counselor  
Craighead County CRT  
New Jersey Family Assistance Center Deployment

I was in the air that morning flying to Portland, ME to work with communities on crisis planning. The pilot let us know as events unfolded. My imagination wasn't large enough to envision the horror that was taking place. I was totally cut-off from family and friends and longed to be home. What I wasn't cut-off from was that spiritual core that is within us and it sustained those of us on board. The community of passengers that shared my journey walked off the aircraft into a new America - one that none of us could comprehend on that tragic day.

Ginger Bankston Bailey, Executive Director  
AR-CRT  
NOVA Board of Directors

Things I remember were the looks of disbelief on the faces of survivors. I remember the young mothers with the babies and small children. They will never know their fathers. The last day we worked it was already dark when we about to leave. The U.S. flag was waving over Liberty State Park. You could see the reflection of the work area lights and smoke from the World Trade Center area. The full harvest moon was shining in the area where the Trade Centers once stood. There were signs everywhere that read "In God We Trust". I hope we never forget God and the lose of life that occurred .

Arkansas State Trooper Terry Whitley  
Craighead County CRT  
New Jersey Family Assistance Center Deployment

Reflecting back to Sept. 11 terrorist attacks brings up lots of emotions. Responding with an eight person AR Crisis Response Team to the World Trade Center victims was truly an honor. I recall their resilience, courage & fortitude to stand in the face of adversity and press on. I remember survivors and family members coming to the Family Assistance Center looking for someone to connect with and asking for assistance in getting through the worst criminal event in U.S. history. I know without a doubt we made a huge difference in the lives of fellow Americans that were truly hurting. We all continue to be affected by this disaster but we refuse to bow to the enemy of terrorism.

Charlene James, Coordinator  
North Little Rock Victim Assistance Program  
Pulaski and Saline County CRT  
New Jersey Family Assistance Center Deployment

## Thank you to the AR-CRT Member Volunteers That Served in the September 11 Deployments

Msgr. Jack Harris, Pine Bluff

*Team Leader*

Charlene James, Benton

*Team Manager*

Jack Bower, Jonesboro

Wayne Eddy, Little Rock

Linda Graham, Jonesboro

Karen Lowery, Little Rock

Terry Whitley, Jonesboro

Kenny Wilkerson, Little Rock

The attacks of September 11th were intended to break our spirit. Instead we have emerged stronger and more unified. We feel renewed devotion to the principles of political, economic and religious freedom, the rule of law and respect for human life. We are more determined than ever to live our lives in freedom.

**Rudolph W. Giuliani**  
Mayor of the City of New York  
December 31, 2001

Jack Bell, Conway

*Team Leader*

Donna Passmore, Jonesboro

*Team Manager*

Angela Brady, Jonesboro

Bart Castleberry, Conway

Dee Engle, Little Rock

Dennis Graham, Jonesboro

Max Snowden, Little Rock

## A Team Leader's Reflection on September 11

The time we spent in New Jersey was at once the worst and the best eight days of my professional career. The 14 hour days were physically taxing and emotionally draining. They



were also extremely rewarding. I feel that we affected many lives in a very positive way. I was very proud to be a part of NOVA and the AR-RT.

Our response team worked with several organizations, including FEMA, Red Cross, Salvation Army, New Jersey State Police, as well as many state and federal government agencies. Our role was to serve as "companions", so we were the first people that the victims would see, as well as the last, when they came to the Family Assistance Center [FAC].

As a result the NOVA volunteers became the individuals everyone looked to for answers. NOVA companions would spend up to eight hours with an individual or family as they worked through the process of saying good-bye

to their loved ones. The Arkansas team worked with teams from several other states such as Pennsylvania, Florida and Ohio.

We were in New Jersey on October 11<sup>th</sup>, the one month anniversary of the attack. The memorial ceremony that was conducted on the pier by the Salvation Army pastor was one of the most moving events I have ever been a part of. As the fog rose over the river and we looked at the still smoldering remains of the WTC, there was no doubt that we, as volunteers, were where God wanted us to be.

The operation at the FAC was in a constant state of change and adjustment, based on changing events. On the day that the U.S. bombed Afghanistan, we were told that the chance of a retaliatory attack was very great. Many volunteers did not come in on that day. The Arkansas team did come in and we had one of our busiest days.

Another change while we were there was the decision to let family members go by boat to visit ground zero. This was a very secure process with police

and military heavily involved. Max Snowden and Dee Engle from our team were put in charge of the check-in process, which was very stressful. Bart Castleberry was among the few volunteers that accompanied the family members to the site.

I don't think anyone who was part of this experience was the same afterward. Every member of our team indicated that he or she would be willing to go again. It was a terrible time in our nation's history, but one that pulled us together as a nation like nothing before or since. I will never again take for granted my freedom, my family or my country.

*Submitted by:*

*Jack Bell, AR-CRT Board of Directors  
AR-CRT Finance Committee Co-Chair  
Faulkner County CRT*

*NOVA Basic CRT 1998  
NOVA Advanced CRT 1999  
Certified Crisis Responder 2002*

*Team Leader - September 11 Deployment  
New Jersey  
Liberty State Park  
Family Assistance Center*