

Rocky Point 9/11 Memorial in the making

Site won't be done but observance set for Sept. 11

BY MATT CALAMIA
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Each fall, the men and women who lost their lives on Sept. 11, 2001, are remembered through ceremonies and vigils throughout the country. This September marks the 10th anniversary of that tragic Tuesday morning, and the Rocky Point Fire District and Shoreham Civic Association will be unveiling a 9/11 memorial honoring those lost.

The memorial, run by the Rocky Point Fire Department 9/11 Committee, will feature a 16-foot beam weighing close to 1,800 pounds from the World Trade Center. The beam was acquired from the New York and New Jersey Port Authority, and will be the centerpiece of a reflecting pool. The memorial will also feature a brick walkway as well as two separate memorial walls: one for the names of the approximately 3,000 victims of the attack, and another for the five local community victims.

The design of the memorial was taken from submissions from members of the community. "We had people submit concept drawings and we chose the one we liked," said Tom Logan, the 9/11 Committee chair. He

said a group of 20 people worked on the design and construction.

The memorial has been paid entirely through fundraising efforts. The bricks used for the walkway were funded by community members who purchased a brick for \$100, and the brick was engraved with the family's name. In total, fundraising efforts have raised approximately \$60,000.

'The memorial has a special place in our hearts.'

— MIKE WILLIAMS
SHOREHAM

Iris Strong, a member of the memorial committee as well as the wife of Ray Strong, a FDNY firefighter who worked at Ground Zero for nearly a month following the attacks, said donating a brick in her family's name will allow her children and grandchildren to visit the site and learn about the attack, as well as know their family played a part in the memorial efforts. "For me personally, not only was I honored to be a part of the committee, my children can go and look at the memorial and look at the beam from the World Trade Center and know their dad was down there for three and a half weeks," she said. "We have a brick that will be there forever. My whole family will know this is here. It's very hard to explain. It's very near

and dear to my heart, coming from a firefighter family."

Due to lack of funds, the memorial may not be fully completed in time for the Sept. 11 ceremony, which begins at 6 pm at Tesla Street and Route 25A in Shoreham, next to the Rocky Point firehouse. The memorial wall commemorating all the victims' names won't be ready because, Logan said, the Committee fell about \$15,000 short. The organization will continue fundraising after Sept. 11.

The presentation will feature many local firefighters, family members of those who died in the attacks and local politicians, including Rep. Tim Bishop (D-Southampton) and state Sen. Ken LaValle (R-Port Jefferson). The ceremony will include a moment of silence and candlelight vigil in addition to speeches.

Mike Williams, whose son Kevin was working for Sandler O'Neill in the south tower of the World Trade Center on 9/11, will attend and maybe give a speech. In past decade, Williams has begun the Kevin Williams Memorial Foundation, which has sent nearly 600 underprivileged children to sports camps.

"It's a very special thing for our family," he said of the memorial. "The whole community has been there for 10 years. They've helped this foundation tremen-



Photo by Patricia Proven

Rocky Point Fire District Commissioner Steve Tumulty at the 9/11 Memorial site on Tesla Street and Route 25A in Shoreham.

dously. The memorial has a special place in our hearts." He said he and his family attend the annual name-reading ceremony at Ground Zero, which takes over four hours until the readers get to Kevin's name.

Kevin attended Boston College on a golf scholarship but his father said his biggest love was baseball. He was a shortstop at Shoreham-Wading River High School, where his former varsity team now plays at the field named in his honor. Each Sept. 11, over 100 people pay their respects to Kevin at a memorial at the field. The school has also retired Kevin's No. 16 but not before his younger brother, Jamie, wore it.

For many, it is difficult to believe a decade has passed since the attacks. For Logan, Sept. 11 is bittersweet. His son, Jack, was born the morning of the attacks, and he sees how fast time goes. "It's kind of amazing that it's been that long. My first son was born on the morning of Sept. 11," he said. "It was one of the greatest days of my life, and one of the worst as well."

For others, like Williams, the time since he lost his 24-year-old son seems both recent and distant. "Sometimes it feels like two weeks ago, and sometimes it feels like 200 years ago," he said. "Even after 10 years, my feelings haven't changed. I still get the same feeling today."

Briarcliff parents and students meet new principal

Patricia Nugent said teaching kindergarten changed her career



Photo by Caitlin Ferrell

The Briarcliff school's new leader, Patricia Nugent, spent time getting to know some of her students on Tuesday night.

BY CAITLIN FERRELL
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Though Briarcliff Elementary School in Shoreham will welcome throngs of new students on the first day of school, Sept. 7, it has already welcomed a new face in Principal Patricia Nugent.

Nugent, who succeeds Jane Ruthkowski after the former principal moved on to Hauppauge schools, was introduced to parents and students at a meet-and-greet on Tuesday, Aug. 23.

About 50 parents and children attended to meet Nugent, who most recently served as assistant principal of the elementary and middle schools in Riverhead.

Nugent said she began her career teaching third, fifth and sixth grades in Huntington schools, before becoming a kindergarten teacher in the Woodhull Early Childhood

Center in Huntington.

"That really changed the direction of my career," Nugent said, adding that it is where her love of working with young children first formed.

Nugent also taught reading in Smithtown and became the reading coordinator in the South Country School district, before becoming assistant principal in Riverhead. In total, Nugent has worked in education for 26 years, minus the five she took off to raise her children, the youngest of whom is now 18.

When Nugent opened the floor to questions, a young boy in the front row asked when the gym would be ready. "That's a great question!" Nugent said, and answered that the gym should be completed soon.

Parents who attended showed pride for the school. Liz Haarke's son, Teddy, will be attending the

special-education kindergarten classes. "Everybody's been wonderful," Haarke said. "It's been the greatest experience so far."

Kristin D'Andrea has a son, Jack, who is going into first grade and two younger children at home. "We liked the old principal, and we're looking forward to the new one," D'Andrea said. "Briarcliff's such a wonderful school."

Nugent has yet to meet with the entire faculty but says she has been "having conversations with teachers." Nugent's goals include adding "rigor" to the academic programs.

Jennifer Margiotta-Watz has a 4-year-old son going into kindergarten and is new to the Briarcliff school. Margiotta-Watz was pleased with Nugent's past experience teaching kindergarten. "If it doesn't start at the beginning, it won't be good later," Margiotta-Watz said.