

Speech given by Jen Murawski, survivor of the North Tower, during the Third Anniversary Remembrance Ceremony at her home town of Saratoga Springs

Good Evening,

My name is Jen Murawski. I've lived in Saratoga Springs for a little over 20 years now. I am your friend, your neighbor, your fellow American. I am also a survivor of the September 11 2001 terrorist attacks. Three years ago today I was at work on the 30th floor of the North Tower, One World Trade Center. What happened that day can only be described as the unimaginable.

At 8:46am, the 1st plane flew into the north tower, my building. My co-workers and I escaped by descending 30 flights of stairs through jet fuel fumes and water. As I exited onto Liberty Street, the 2nd plane flew into the south tower right above me. I was able to run south and stopped after a little ways to look up. I just stood there and watched the gaping holes in the sides of the buildings. I was a couple of blocks away when the south tower collapsed catching me in the dust cloud. I eventually found refuge in a restaurant in Battery Park only minutes before the north tower collapsed.

After the dust began to clear, I was evacuated off of Lower Manhattan by boat and brought to NJ where I could get medical assistance. I was then bussed to an Army base at Caven Point and then bussed again to another Army base in Bayonne NJ. My family was able to get to me in Bayonne NJ at about 11:00pm that evening. We got back to Saratoga at about 5:00am September 12th. I was in shock, I was injured, but I was glad to be home.

I remember a few months after the attacks, a co-worker of mine said to me, "Imagine the story you'll have to tell your children" I remember being angry with this woman. Why, why would I tell my children about such a horrific day. I didn't want anyone to hear about it. A few years have passed now, and I think I finally get the point. My son Ethan is going to be a year old next month and it's my duty, my responsibility to some day tell him about my experiences. Not about the death and destruction, but about the courage and hope. I can tell him about the brave men and women that saved his mommy's life, about the compassion of strangers and the strength of this great nation he was born into.

I know a lot of 9/11 information has been hyped in the media lately, especially with the election, the 9/11 commission report. But for me, today is not about political agenda's or foreign policy. It's not about the would have's, the could have's or the should have's. Today is about remembering a group of everyday people. That beautiful Tuesday morning, we got up, got dressed. We went to work, got on airplanes. We were going about our daily lives. By the end of the day, 2,973 of us were lost forever. For those of us fortunate enough to survive, we were left to deal with the physical and/or emotional scars that will last a lifetime.

Today is also about remembering our family, friends and loved ones, that sat by the phone waiting to hear word on who was dead and who was alive.

Today is about remembering the first responders that rushed to the scenes, some from all over the country. Most of them left scarred for a lifetime.

Today is about remembering the people that donated time, money, or blood. Contributing whatever they could to help out.

Today is about remembering every person that hung a flag, said a prayer or shed a tear.

I don't think there was a soul not affected somehow by what happened 3 year ago, and today, September 11th, is about never forgetting.

Let us also not forget about the brave men and women at home and abroad that put on their uniforms everyday to defend and protect us.

In closing, I would like to read an excerpt from a poem written by a gentleman a couple of years back. It goes something like this:

Oh say can you see, by the dawn's early light

What so proudly we hailed at the twilights' last gleaming?

Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight

O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?

And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air

Gave proof through the night. That our flag was still there

Oh say does that star spangled banner yet wave

O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

Thank you