

Celebrate Community Helpers

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For more information, visit the National Museum of American History website <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/sept11/>.

September 11, 2001, will be remembered as one of the most shocking days in American history. *Terrorists hijacked* four airplanes and used them as weapons against the United States. The attacks destroyed the World Trade Center, harmed the Pentagon, and killed more than 3,000 people.

- The World Trade Center was a group of office buildings in New York City, famous for its Twin Towers that were 110 floors tall. The World Trade Center was hit by two planes.
- The Pentagon is a huge office building near Washington, D.C. where workers and members of the armed forces plan and support the American military. The Pentagon was hit by one plane.
- A fourth plane, Flight 93, was also *hijacked*. Some passengers heard by phone that other *hijacked* planes were being used as weapons, so they organized and stormed the cockpit of the airplane. Ultimately Flight 93 crashed in an open field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, killing everyone on board. Officials believe the *hijackers* had been planning to crash into a building in Washington, D.C.

Immediately after the attacks, first responders, including police officers, firefighters, members of the military, and emergency medical workers, raced to the attack sites to rescue survivors and offer help to people at the sites. Many first responders were hurt or killed as a result of the attacks on September 11, 2001.



This photograph, taken by firefighter Jon Culberson, is one of the first images of the Pentagon shortly after the terrorist attack.

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Following the *terrorist* attacks of September 11, children and adults from across the country felt a strong need to aid and show support for the first responders and rescue workers at the three crash sites. Warm notes from supporters were comforting to the workers who had very hard jobs to do. In addition, many individuals across the country responded by making art and jewelry that was specifically related to the sites of the attacks or generally *patriotic*.

In response to the attacks by al Qaeda, an international *terrorist* group, America began to lead a war against *terrorism* that has included fighting in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

- *terrorism*: the use of violent actions to frighten people as a way of trying to achieve a political goal (Terrorists are people who use terrorism.)
- *hijack*: to take control of (an aircraft) by force
- *patriotic*: having or showing great love and support for your country



With over 16,000 military employees, the corridors and offices of the Pentagon are filled with uniformed soldiers from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard. Baseball-style caps like these are authorized for wear on board ship, and are traditional souvenirs of vessels visited or served on. These two hats were recovered from the Pentagon after the attacks on September 11, 2001.

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For adults and kids to follow together.

1. Take a look at the second to last picture in *The Little Chapel That Stood*, where a young boy gives an American flag to a firefighter and holds a “thank you” sign (online page at http://www.abcurtiss.com/graphics/books2/l_chapel/little_chapel14.htm). What did the New York City firefighters do on September 11, 2001? Why should we say “thank you” to firefighters and other first responders everywhere?

2. Brainstorm together: What people or groups are helpers in your community? (firefighters, police officers, rescue squad, members of the military, etc.)

3. Once you have thought of a few, investigate the one you are most interested in.
 - Check a phone book to find the names of first responder organizations.
 - Look online or in the newspaper for special “Open House” days or other notes on visiting first responder organizations.
 - If you plan to investigate using a local newspaper: Browse the headlines for any accidents, rescues, or problems in the community. See if any first responders were involved in the story. What did they do to help?

Tip If you are considering using the “crime” or “police beat” section of the paper to look for stories about first responders, preview their content before sharing it with your child.

 - Look online for your first responder organization. Explore the site for pictures, recent activities, or names of the people in the organization. Have you ever been to any of the places where the first responders recently helped?
 - Plan a visit to the offices or headquarters of your first responder organization.

4. Take a look at this certificate that was given to a September 11 rescuer. Col. Mark Volk was one of the brave Pentagon employees who helped save people trapped in the damaged Pentagon building in Washington, D.C. As a huge fire raged, Colonel

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THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL THOSE WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING: THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AUTHORIZED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER 16 JANUARY 1969 HAS AWARDED THE MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL TO COLONEL MARK VOLK OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR OPERATIONS

FOR outstanding meritorious service in risking his personal safety in order to rescue fellow soldiers and civilians following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack on the Pentagon. Without regard for his own safety, Colonel Volk overcame shock, chaos, fire and deadly smoke to aid in the rescue efforts. Colonel Volk's heroic acts are a testament of his bravery and reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Army.

THIS 2ND DAY OF OCTOBER 2001

Permanent Order 274-12

Headquarters, U.S. Total Army Personnel Command, Alexandria, Virginia 22332-0471, Kathryn G. Frost, The Adjutant General

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Volk ordered an evacuation and rushed around the building to look for survivors. In recognition of his actions Colonel Volk was awarded a Meritorious Service Medal with a certificate recognizing his actions on September 11, 2001. (Meritorious means “deserving reward or honor.”) As you look at the picture on the last page and read the words on the certificate, look for:

- the name of the person who is being recognized (*Col. Mark Volk*)
- the name and signature of the person who is presenting the certificate (*Kathryn Frost—an officer in the army*)
- the reason for recognizing Col. Mark Volk (*the lines that start with “FOR”*)
- the date of the certificate (*October 2, 2001—in this case, it’s written in a very fancy way, “This 2nd day of October 2001.”*)

5. Have you ever received a certificate? Why did you receive the certificate? How did it make you feel?

6. Create: What should your certificate look like?

Most certificates include:

- the name of the person or group who is being recognized
- the name of the person or group who is presenting the certificate
- the reason for recognizing the person or group
- the date

Some certificates also include pictures. Should your certificate have a picture? Can you think of a symbol that is related to the person or group you are recognizing?

Some certificates also include colors. Does your organization have colors on its logo or website? Can you think of colors that are related to the person or group you are recognizing, like red, white, and blue for a patriotic group?

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As you create your certificate, think about how you want the first responder to feel when he or she sees it. What feelings do you hope to show and what feelings do you want the first responder to feel?

Have fun creating a certificate that will honor a first responder in your community.

7. Present your certificate to the person or group you are recognizing. Explain your certificate's words and symbols. What colors did you pick and why? How did you find the information to include on your certificate?

Tip If you plan to present your certificate in person, contact someone in the organization before you visit. It would be disappointing to miss seeing the person or to interrupt his or her important work!

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Read the “Directions” sheets and “Parent Guide” for step-by-step instructions.

OBJECTIVES

The students will be better able to:

- Describe the role of one or more first responder in the community.
- Communicate ideas and information through colors, images, and words.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Certificate’s text is accurately spelled.
- Defends or provides a sound explanation for certificate design choices in the context of researched information or personal interpretation.
- *(optional)* Certificate’s images and colors communicate ideas.

STANDARDS

NCHS History Standards

K-4 Historical Thinking Standards

4B. Obtain historical data.

K-4 Historical Content Standards

4B. The student understands ordinary people who have exemplified values and principles of American democracy.

IRA/NCTE Language Arts Standards

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

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21st-Century Skills

Learning and Innovation Skills

- Creativity and Innovation

Information, Media, and Technology Skills

- Media Literacy