

Patent Trader
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Front Page story

9/11 mom fights grief as a 'hero'

Network honors Pound
Ridge resident for aiding war
victims.

Chris Serico
The Patent Trader

Elizabeth Alderman's spirit collapsed with the towers of the World Trade Center Sept. 11, 2001, but the charity the Pound Ridge resident founded in her late son's name has allowed her family and international victims of violence to rebuild.

While working for Bloomberg Media, 25-year-old Peter Alderman made a business trip to Windows on the World on the 106th floor of the north tower for a technology conference.

After terrorists rammed an airplane into the building, he used his Blackberry to exchange e-mails with his older sister Jane.

Jane would receive Peter's last e-mail at 9:25 a.m.: "We're stuck, the room is filling with smoke, I'm scared."

Elizabeth Alderman, who lived with husband Stephen in Armonk at the time, recalled the series of events earlier this week.

"People say time heals everything, (but) time doesn't heal a thing," Alderman said. "But you learn to deal with grief better as time goes on. And there was a sense of needing to do something good after he died."



Elizabeth
Alderman

Learn more

To donate or learn more about the Peter C. Alderman Foundation, call 914-557-7735, visit www.petercaldermanfoundation.org or write to P.O. Box 278, Bedford, NY 10506.

The aftermath of conflict

Almost nine months after her youngest child died, Alderman was still searching for solace and purpose when she saw a "Nightline" story about refugee trauma among Afghanistan natives. War had torn families apart, sending them into hysterical and depressed states.

The report interviewed Harvard University professor Richard Mollica, an expert on the treatment of victims of mass violence. Two weeks after the show, Alderman arranged to meet Mollica at the offices of the Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma to develop a charity with an active approach to healing.

"After war, they have to have shelter and they have to have food, but they also have to exist," Alderman said. "The fourth-largest global disease is depression."

The Aldermans said they invested the money from the 9/11 Victims Compensation Fund into the 2002 creation of the Peter C. Alderman Foundation, a nonprofit organization that trains doctors to treat victims in the aftermath of war and conflict.

Elizabeth Alderman said all of the foundation funds go directly to the treatment of victims and that her family pays for operational expenses.

"It has become more than a full-time job, but busy is good," Alderman said. "Peter was our

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9/11 mother honored for charity work

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youngest; he was my baby. I had two choices when he died; I could either crawl into bed and never get out or continue to put one foot in front of another. Crawling into bed was not an option for me."

A worldwide epidemic

Alderman said terrorism, torture and mass violence impact more than 1 billion survivors — about one in six people worldwide. With a mission to alleviate their suffering in the memory of her son, the foundation instructs doctors from other countries to fuse Western medical therapies with local healing traditions. The organization asks these doctors to pass along these techniques to at least 10 more healers.

Training sessions held in Orvieto, Italy, in September of 2003 and 2004 were attended by healers from Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Chile, Iraq, Rwanda, Spain and Uganda, according to the organization.

"Eighty percent of the doctors from the first year came back for the second year," Alderman said.

The foundation also is creating an Internet destination to study, publish and exchange related information and a global network of clinics to serve as health care centers. The Web site is slated to launch in the spring and by 2005, the organization hopes to operate Peter C. Alderman Clinics in Cambodia and the Republic of Srpska, a country that retains the northern and eastern borders of Yugoslavia.

Rather than offering pity, the foundation confronts post-traumatic stress and clinical depression in countries where such care



Courtesy of CourtTV

At the Everyday Heroes ceremonies in Washington D.C. were Timothy Rooney, regional vice president, government and public affairs, Cablevision; Kristin Dolan, senior vice president, digital products, Cablevision; Elizabeth Alderman of Pound Ridge; and Amanda Grove, CourtTV anchor and reporter.

is rare or nonexistent, Elizabeth Alderman said.

"These people don't need another friend or somebody to go, 'Oh, dear,' for them," Stephen Alderman said. "They need somebody to stand in between the disease that they have and them."

Sponsors of the Peter C. Alderman Foundation include the World Bank, National Institute of Health, Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts General Hospital and the University of Rome.

Honoring charity, memory

As part of an effort to recognize members of the community who "demonstrate acts of bravery and courage," Court TV honored Elizabeth Alderman and five others Nov. 4 with an Everyday Heroes Award at its ninth annual ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Court TV developed the award

with cable operators, community leaders, legislators and law enforcement officials. A Cablevision representative nominated Elizabeth Alderman after reading an article about her in USA Today.

Ellen Schned, a Court TV senior vice president, said previous award recipients include Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry and Arizona Sen. John McCain.

"Liz is an exceptional individual," Schned said. "I think she was a magnificent example of taking perhaps the worst tragedy in our nation's history and creating a foundation of hope — turning around a horrible situation and creating something positive out of it in the name of her son."

Cablevision said it will run announcements honoring Elizabeth Alderman, Schned said.

Stephen Alderman, who attended his wife's awards ceremony

in the international ballroom of the Hilton Washington with their daughter, said he was proud of his wife. He added that the foundation has been a new source of inspiration for the family.

"We spend all day doing this," he said. "We thought it was going to be easy, but the kid was worth it. It's helped us (grieve) without any fear of contradiction. It's made us feel better. It doesn't lessen our emotion so much, but what it does do is to space out the time."

Sharing the honor with her family, Elizabeth Alderman said Peter would have thought his mom "was a hoot" at the podium this month.

"I always tried to teach my kids that they could make a difference," Alderman said. "After Peter was killed, I started to doubt that. But now I absolutely believe it again."

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