Upcoming Events

- On September 10th Project Rebirth will participate in an event at the Hylton Performing Arts Center to honor the 15th anniversary of 9/11 by helping First Responder and Military communities find hope, healing and resilience. Project Rebirth Social Media Director Monica Davis has quarterbacked our central role in a program that will include a viewing of the “Rebirth: Brian” short film, remarks by Project Rebirth Board Chair Brian Rafferty and by First Responders Senior Advisor Bob Gray along with presentations by local leaders in the Veteran and First Responders communities.

Press Release

From the Executive Director

As the 15th Anniversary of 9/11 approaches, the Project Rebirth team continues its mission to help people heal, hope and grow more resilient, even in the face of life’s greatest challenges. Our programs and teaching tools are being developed and put to work in classrooms and communities across the country. The World Trade Center site continues to evolve. The stories of grief, trauma and loss continue to be studied, discussed and better understood. And at Project Rebirth we continue to use our unique collection of films to help people face their challenges, share their stories and imagine a happier, healthier next chapter in their lives. We are grateful to all of you who continue to support our mission.

Helen Rafferty

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- And this month, we are proud to highlight the life and work of long-time Project Rebirth volunteer and FRRN Team Leader Bob Gray.
- 2016 will mark the 15th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks...
• Also on September 10th, Project Cohort’s Austin Street location will hold an event at the Liberty Beer Market in Liberty, Texas to raise awareness of and support for their work with local Veterans. Peer Leader Ed Hashbarger and his Cohort participants have worked with local businesses and organizations for an afternoon that promises to be both informative and inspiring.

Project Cohort Austin Fundraiser

Come out for a day of gratitude, music, raffles, bounce house fun, and to support Project Cohort (Austin): Meeting an Urgent Need to Support Veterans

Project Cohort was designed by nationally recognized experts in resilience building and recovery to help Veterans transition to healthy, purposeful civilian lives. The program creates closely bonded groups of fellow Veterans – Cohorts – that work together over a significant period of time to provide the support and camaraderie that Veterans lose when they leave military service.

Event Point of Contact and Project Cohort (Austin) Peer Leader: Ed.Hashbarger@projectrebirth.org

"It takes one kind of courage to serve and deploy. It takes an entirely different kind of courage to openly and honestly share your darkest moments in the interest of inspiring positive change" – Project Rebirth, Founding Organization behind Project Cohort

Donate to Project Rebirth: http://www.projectrebirth.org/donate
To commemorate the 15th Anniversary of 9/11, Project Rebirth will hold a nation-wide viewing event organized through our social media platforms. Viewing of Rebirth films in Virginia, Texas, Maryland, New York and other locations will serve to help families and communities honor the memory of that day and celebrate the courage and resilience our nation has shown in its aftermath. Links to our short films and to “Rebirth” on Amazon will be up on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages to facilitate viewing from September 9-12th.

Look for photos in the next Project Rebirth UPDATE. Capture your screening by sharing photos either posted to our Facebook, by direct message, or by emailing our Social Media Director Monica.Davis@ProjectRebirth.org. Whether you watch the film alone or with others, in your homes, in a public library or school, or somewhere even larger like a movie theater or community town hall - you name it, we want to see it - and we want to share your photos and stories on our social media platforms.

We encourage you to download our full-length documentary film REBIRTH from Amazon for only $3.99, or for a limited time only you may watch a selection of our short films for free starting September 9th - September 12th. Links to our short films will be shared on social media during those dates only, and will return to Project Rebirth dedicated program access after the 12th.

Joining us in our nation-wide viewing event is The Bedford Playhouse in Bedford, New York. On September 11, “Rebirth” film producer and board member David Solomon will host a viewing of “Rebirth” followed by a Q & A with the audience. David has been a key supporter of both our film – making efforts and our larger mission, and will provide a unique perspective on the making of “Rebirth” and its impact on the world.

Bedford Playhouse: REBIRTH Screening
Military & Veterans

- **In July**, the Peer Leaders who run our Cohort groups met for the first time to participate in intensive training for the leadership role they have taken on.

  *Project Cohort Peer Leader Training 2016*

- **This Fall**, Project Cohort will have groups operating in Iowa State University, Texas State University, Felician University, Georgetown University and in Austin, Texas. On November 10th, Project Rebirth will host an evening of presentations and discussions with these extraordinary young Veterans – their commitment to forming and leading supportive communities for their fellow Veterans is the foundation of our strategy to empower our nation’s military heroes to utilize their unique strengths and experience to build healthier, more purpose-driven lives. Our November 10th event will raise awareness of our work with our nation’s military heroes.

  *Our November 10th event will raise awareness of our work with our nation’s military heroes - Details to come out soon.*

- Project Rebirth is proud to announce an exciting new collaboration. **John Secor, Director of The Sarasota Film Festival**, is working with us to organize a film project that will give Veterans in the Sarasota area the opportunity to work together to produce a documentary film. Their film will be previewed at the next Sarasota Film Festival in April 2017.

- Our **Women Warriors Curriculum** (WWC) has proved to be a powerful and positive experience for Women Veterans. Based on the enthusiastic feedback from our first groups of participants, we are eager to expand the current program, an intensive 4 day workshop – to include a continuation of care component that will maintain and strengthen the support participants have found in our WWC workshops, discussions and exercises.

  **Follow Project Rebirth on Social Media:**
  Facebook: @RebirthAtGroundZero
  Facebook: @ProjectRebirth
  Twitter: @ProjectRebirth
  Instagram: @Project_Rebirth

Donate to Project Rebirth: [http://www.projectrebirth.org/donate](http://www.projectrebirth.org/donate)
Educators & Community Leaders

The Project Rebirth Education team is preparing to launch teaching tools built around our nine short films. Senior Education Advisor Tim Bowen is working on simple, flexible guides teachers can use to supplement their current curricula or build new lesson plans. New Project Rebirth team member Christina Rancke has worked diligently to place our teaching tools onto our online platform that has been generously provided by LiveTiles Mosaic. This will allow teachers to easily access and adopt our suite of films and discussion guides at the national level. Our curriculum focused on the theme of Resilience in Diversity is under development at Georgetown University.

First Responders

Our First Responders Resilience Network (FRRN) team has had a very busy summer. In July, FRRN team member and retired Virginia Beach, VA Fire Chief Donna Brehm represented us at the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Convention in Colorado Springs, CO. Donna presented the team’s recommendations for policies that will better address the compelling need to address trauma inherent in the Firefighters’ profession in a pro-active manner.

The recommendations were very favorably received by a number of NFPA review members, including the representative from the New York Firefighters Association.

Project Rebirth First Responders Senior Advisor Bob Gray has assembled a truly impressive team to move the FRRN’s mission forward. FRRN team members: Bob Gray, Metahab Founder Joyce Mikal-Flynn, David Scheinfeld, Houston Fire Department Psychologist Sam Buser, retired Virginia Beach, VA Fire Chief Donna Brehm, New Millennium President/CEO Dodie Gill, Gary Randall of New Millenium, and retired Federal Fire Service Firefighter Allen Wahlstrom.

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And this month, we are proud to highlight the life and work of long-time Project Rebirth volunteer and FRRN Team Leader Bob Gray

What Does Project Rebirth Mean To Me?

In the last fifteen years my life has been profoundly impacted by two events, one professional – the September 11th attacks and one personal – a traumatic brain injury in 2011.

I spent 30 years with Arlington County Fire Department (ACFD), serving as a firefighter, paramedic, Captain and Battalion Chief. During my career, like many first responders, I was involved in a number of significant responses. However, the most impactful response involved the response to the Pentagon after the September 11, 2001 attack. I was involved in fighting the massive Pentagon fire caused by the attack and then served as a collapse team leader for the remainder of the two weeks we were at the Pentagon. The 9/11 attacks left a mark on the nation and the first responders at the World Trade Center, Pentagon and Shanksville.

About four years after the September 11th attacks as an ACFD Battalion Chief I was assigned to work with the September 11 Memorial & Museum to provide them with 9/11 artifacts and information from ACFD. I developed many close friends with Museum staff and also was introduced to the amazing organization, Project Rebirth. I continued working with the Museum and Project Rebirth until I retired from ACFD in 2011. Shortly before I retired I had the opportunity, along with other ACFD personnel to attend the premier of Project Rebirth’s movie in NYC. The movie was an amazing and emotional story of the recovery process for individuals who had been personally impacted by the 9/11 attacks.

After retiring I moved to Texas. Only a few months after moving, I was working on our house when a ladder failed resulting in a sixteen-foot fall causing traumatic brain injury. The damage to my skull and brain were significant. After major brain surgery I spent several weeks in a coma and about 2 months recovering at Parkland Hospital in Dallas, Texas. As a result of my injuries, I faced a number of challenges including memory loss, partially paralysis and the loss of my ability to communicate. The combination

Bob with his wife Lesli, and children Olivia and Max
of a quick response by first responders and doctors and rehabilitation services combined with my overall fitness at the time of the injury and the amazing support from family and friends enabled me to make a significant recovery.

A little over a year after my accident Project Rebirth invited me to attend an event hosted by Ride2Recovery in Texas. I briefly spoke to R2R riders who were riding from San Antonio to Ft. Worth. The R2R riders are veterans and first responders who are using cycling to help recover from their injuries. It was a very emotional experience for me. It also inspired me return to my most cherished sport, cycling. It was slow process but in 2013 I was able to ride one day of the Texas event.

Shortly after my first ride with R2R I began volunteering with Project Rebirth. This provided an opportunity for me to continue working with first responders and veterans as I recovered. It also increased my interest in helping others.

The support from Project Rebirth has enhanced my recovery by providing me ways to help others who have also experienced significant events. I will always wonder where or how I would be without Project Rebirth. Through my work with Project Rebirth I am able to work with many incredible and inspiring people, many of who are recovering from similar injuries and experiences. My life has been refreshed and I have a way to help others through Project Rebirth.

Bob Gray
2016 marks the 15th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks...

Project Rebirth’s team members approach each 9/11 anniversary in a different way, some having responded to the attacks on the day, some having volunteered for Military service in response, and some having lost someone dear to them on the day or in connection with the event. All of us who support the work of Project Rebirth have one thing in common: a commitment to find ways to make something good out of a horrific chain of events, and to thoughtfully commit to the effort to “never forget.”

For Project Rebirth, to “never forget” means more than holding dear the memories of the lost, but also to work diligently so that something positive comes – over time – from that loss. As the years pass, and we learn more about the suffering associated with grief and trauma, for Project Rebirth the urgency of our mission increases. On the 15th anniversary of 9/11, humankind knows much more about the nature of building resilience, built on sharing stories, medical and scientific research, and the ability to communicate more widely and easily than just a few decades ago. Project Rebirth has played a role in that journey of shared knowledge.

Their foresight captured not only the extraordinary process of rebuilding Ground Zero, but the strengthening of the spirit of nine diverse individuals who were affected by the attacks in different ways. Our documentary film “Rebirth,” our nine short films and our “Rebirth at Ground Zero” immersive film experience are viewed by hundreds of thousands of people each year, and share the stories of how individuals and communities recover and rebuild over time from some of the most difficult challenges we face. As it became clear that the films had many applications beyond their original intent, people from a variety of backgrounds stepped up to join our team and apply Project Rebirth’s content in different ways to help people better cope with grief and trauma. Professionals from fields as diverse as mental health, emergency services and education told us of the ways that they could, and then did, use our films in their work. Project Rebirth asked them to work together to share their experiences, professional skills and their passion to help others in a collaborative effort to bring to different communities the best of what they have to offer in an effort to help people learn to build resilience in the face of trauma.

So it was both the legacy of 9/11 and the people who stepped forward over the years that informed our strategy and sharpened our focus onto Project Rebirth’s communities today: First Responders, Military & Veterans, and Educators & Community Leaders. Fifteen years after the 9/11 attacks, we look back and wonder at the passage of time and see the WTC site a vibrant center of activity in lower Manhattan, but we ask you also to look at how Project Rebirth’s teams and our partner organizations continue working to make something good out of something horrific, by learning from the disasters that we can never forget.

Thank you for supporting our work,

Brian Rafferty
Board Chair

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