

The New York Says Thank You Foundation

Jeff Parness, Founder & Chairman
The New York Says Thank You Foundation
New York, NY
917-806-8061 / Jeff@NewYorkSaysThankYou.org

Susan Littlejohn, Founder
Build An Ark Animal Rescue
Ellijay, GA [Tel#. 706-974-6060](tel:706-974-6060)
www.BuildAnArkAnimalRescue.org

Steve Perkerson, Amenities Director
Coosawattee River Resort Association
Ellijay, GA
706-276-1060 ext 223 / steve@crra.biz

New Yorkers Commemorate 10th Anniversary of 9/11 by Helping Georgia Tornado Survivors Rebuild

**25 FDNY Firefighters join hundreds of disaster survivors from around the U.S.
to “Pay It Forward” in Ellijay, Georgia July 28-31, 2011**

Community Barn-Raising will Rebuild *BUILD AN ARK ANIMAL RESCUE*

July 27, 2011 - New York, NY & Ellijay, GA – A volunteer organization born out of the ashes of 9/11, is expecting to turn out 1,000 volunteers in Ellijay, Georgia July 28-31, 2011 as a way to commemorate the upcoming 10th year Anniversary of 9/11. **New York Says Thank You Foundation**, working in partnership with **Build An Ark Animal Rescue**, **Coosawattee River Resort Association**, **Jordan Building Construction** of Brooks, GA, and **Lester Buildings** of Lester Prairie, Minnesota, will be bringing 300 volunteers from New York City and from across the United States to help rebuild a 10,000 sq. foot animal rescue barn destroyed on April 4, 2011 when tornadoes ripped through Ellijay.

This special barn houses 60 rescue animals cared for by Susan Littlejohn of **Build An Ark Animal Rescue**. **The animals** which include horses, donkeys, alpacas, sheep, goats, pigs, ducks, and birds **are used as therapeutic companions for disabled children, senior citizens, and juvenile offenders.**

At the core of the volunteer rebuilding effort will be 25 New York City firefighters, many of whom survived the World Trade Center attacks, who will be volunteering in Ellijay in honor of the upcoming 10th Anniversary of 9/11 as their way to “Pay It Forward.”

“New Yorkers will never forget what people from Georgia and small towns all across the United States did for us in the days, weeks, and months following 9/11,” stated Jeff Parness, founder of New York Says Thank You. *“Helping to rebuild Susan’s barn and strengthening the community of Ellijay by promoting volunteerism is our way of honoring that incredible volunteer spirit that united our Nation on 9/12.”*

Rebuilding a Barn, Strengthening an Organization, and Strengthening a Community

In addition to the barn-raising, the volunteers will help in numerous other landscaping, building, and crafts projects including the landscaping of an outdoor amphitheater, building an educational center, and transforming trees destroyed in the tornado into benches and fencing.

The main goal of this rebuilding effort is to strengthen Build An Ark Animal Rescue by empowering children and families from the local community of Ellijay, and as far away as the Atlanta Metro Area to volunteer in this interactive family farm and animal rescue program. Beyond caring for the rescue animals and using the animals to inspire disabled kids, seniors, and at-risk youth who are sent by local court systems to care for the animals to fulfill their community service obligations, Susan Littlejohn sees Build An Ark as a place to inspire volunteerism where children and families can enjoy experiences together by helping others, and in turn, commit to volunteering in their own communities in other ways.

“By bringing the community of Ellijay together to work alongside our FDNY firefighters to build this barn, we hope to strengthen Susan’s relationships in the community so she can make a greater impact in the years to come in caring for these beautiful animals and provide healing to the special needs children, senior citizens, and at-risk kids she touches through these animals,” added Jeff Parness.

Disaster Survivors from Around the U.S. to “Pay It Forward” in Ellijay, GA this July 28-31

In addition to the 25 New York City firefighters, Ground Zero construction workers, 9/11 Family Members, New York City schoolchildren and scores of other volunteers from the Big Apple and from across the state of Georgia expected to participate in this historic rebuilding effort -- New York Says Thank You Foundation will also be bringing to Ellijay disaster survivor volunteers from all the communities around the U.S. the Foundation has assisted on *previous* anniversaries of 9/11 and who continually volunteer each year as their way to “Pay It Forward.” This group includes San Diego wildfire survivors, Hurricane Katrina survivors from Slidell, Louisiana, and tornado survivors from Utica, Illinois, DeGonia Springs, Indiana, Groesbeck, Texas, Greensburg, Kansas, Little Sioux, Iowa, and Mena, Arkansas.

Children invited to paint Stars of HOPE

Local children and families are encouraged to come out to the barn-raising and paint **Stars of HOPE** – a special project of New York Says Thank You Foundation and Groesbeck Rebuilds America where kids paint inspirational messages on wooden stars that are planted on street corners throughout devastated communities. The Stars of HOPE painted at the Build An Ark barn-raising in Ellijay, Georgia will be sent to brighten up communities and inspire hope in **Joplin, Missouri, Tuscaloosa, Birmingham** – and **Japan**.

Local Service Heroes will Honor Noah Harris by Stitching The National 9/11 Flag on Saturday July 30

In addition to the barn-raising and volunteer rebuilding weekend, local service heroes from the community will be invited to place ceremonial stitches in **The National 9/11 Flag**, a 30-foot American flag destroyed in the aftermath of the collapse of The World Trade Center. This ceremony will take place at 1PM at Gilmer High School and will honor Noah Harris, a graduate of Ellijay High School who died while serving his country in Iraq. Once fully restored by this year's 10th year Anniversary of 9/11, The National 9/11 Flag will become part of the permanent collection of **The National 9/11 Memorial Museum** being built at the World Trade Center site in Lower Manhattan. More information about this flag can be found at www.National911Flag.org

Local companies and supporters nationwide coming together to support this 9/11 tribute Barn-Raising

Local companies, organizations, and public officials have come together in record numbers to support this national volunteer initiative and barn-raising. **Local supporters include:** 28 Main, Aaron's, Action Towing, American Legion Post 82, American Paper, Amicalola EMC, Appalachian Country Magazine, Appalachian Supply Company, Artistic Tile by Randy Bell, Bojangles, Boy Scouts, Chick-Fil-A, El Reys, Ellijay Fire Chief Sam West, ETC, ETCtv3, fetchyournews.com, First Baptist Church, First Methodist Church, Food Lion, George David, Gilmer Arts and Heritage Association, Gilmer County Chamber of Commerce, Gilmer County Commissioners, Gilmer County High School, Gilmer Fire Chief Tony Pritchett, Hall's Tree Service, Humane Society of America, IDWIC, Ingles, John McWaters Structural Engineering, Kevin Panter Insurance, Kroger, Lance Trucking, Lions Club, Lowe's, My Brother's Keeper, Noah's Weekend Organizing Committee, Noah's Wish, North GA Fire & Safety, North Georgia Medical Center, Peachtree Rides, Pourhouse, Priest's Recycling, Rick & Lucy Harris, Ronnie Thompson Ford, Shanes BBQ, Share Corp., Simply-American.com, Southeast Llama Rescue, Southeastern Bluegrass Association Ellijay Chapter, Tow's Jon Boy, Tractor Supply, United Community Bank, Vulcan Materials, and WalMart.

New York and national support has also come from: Association for a Better New York, Bernstein Litowitz Berger & Grossmann, GE, Greensburg Kansas "Pay It Forward" Committee, Individual Entertainment & Walnut Hill Media, Jonathan M. Tisch, KPMG, Lewis Kingsley Foundation, Merrill Lynch, Bank of America, REBNY Foundation, SNR Denton, and Triangle Rodeo Club of Greensburg, KS.

PEOPLE INTERESTED IN DONATING TO BUILD AN ARK ANIMAL RESCUE to support their program expenses including feeding and caring for the animals can **send their tax deductible donations to:**

NEW YORK SAYS THANK YOU FOUNDATION, attn: Build an Ark Animal Rescue, c/o United Community Bank, 588 Industrial Blvd., Ellijay GA 30540. (EIN# 20-1554830) Donations can also be made online at

www.BuildAnArkAnimalRescue.org. In addition to feeding and housing the animals, **Build An Ark also needs a new animal trailer, a Kubota tractor, and riding mower** to support their growing operations.

Finally, **Build An Ark Animal Rescue is seeking to expand their volunteer staff and has opportunities** for people interested in serving as **Barn Manager, Volunteer Coordinator, Animal Rescue Manager, Bookkeeper, and Outreach Coordinator**. Please contact Susan Littlejohn at 706-974-6060 or send resume to bkp@fetchyournews.com .

TIMING OF EVENTS

(ALL EVENTS AT "BUILD AN ARK" BARN - 27 EAGLE MOUNTAIN DRIVE, ELLIJAY, GA - UNLESS NOTED)

THURSDAY 7/28/11

11:20AM FDNY FIREFIGHTERS ARRIVE ATL / AIRTRAN
1:00PM HONOR GUARD PROCESSION ACROSS GEORGIA FROM ATL TO ELLIJAY
6:00PM COMMUNITY WELCOME KICK-OFF DINNER AT BARN

FRIDAY 7/29/11

8:00AM FLAG RAISING CEREMONY AT BARN – WORK BEGINS THROUGH 5PM
6:30PM VOLUNTEER DINNER AT BARN
8:00PM COMMUNITY MOVIE NIGHT AT BARN -- "NEW YORK SAYS THANK YOU" FILM
(Rain alternative at Gilmer High School – 408 Bobcat Trail, Ellijay, GA)

SATURDAY 7/30/11

8:00AM WORK BEGINS THROUGH 5PM
12:00-3PM NATIONAL 9/11 FLAG ON DISPLAY AT GILMER HIGH SCHOOL (408 Bobcat Trail, Ellijay)
1:00PM FORMAL NATIONAL 9/11 FLAG STITCHING CEREMONY BEGINS
5:30PM "PAY IT FORWARD" CLOSING CEREMONY AT BARN
6:30PM VOLUNTEER DINNER AT BARN
7:00-10PM BLUEGRASS CONCERT AT BARN – COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEERS INVITED

SUNDAY 7/31/11

8:00AM 9/11 MEMORIAL BAGPIPE PROCESSION OF FIRST RESPONDERS AND VOLUNTEERS AT BARN
9:00AM COMMUNITY CELEBRATION SERVICE & MEMORIAL TREE DEDICATION
10:30AM FAREWELL BRUNCH AND VOLUNTEER SEND-OFF

About The New York Says Thank You Foundation

Started in 2003 at the suggestion of a 5-year-old boy, The New York Says Thank You Foundation has grown into the Nation's largest direct service volunteer organization focused on the 9/11 Anniversary. Each year around the 9/11 Anniversary, The New York Says Thank You Foundation sends hundreds of volunteers from New York City along with disaster survivors from across the country to help rebuild communities around the United States recovering from disaster. For more information, please visit

www.NewYorkSaysThankYou.org

###