# Chapter 25
# Community-Based Memorials to September 11, 2001: Environmental Stewardship as Memory Work

**Erika S. Svendsen and Lindsay K. Campbell**

**Abstract** This chapter investigates how people use trees, parks, gardens, and other natural resources as raw materials in and settings for memorials to September 11, 2001. In particular, we focus on 'found space living memorials', which we define as sites that are community-managed, re-appropriated from their prior use, often carved out of the public right-of-way, and sometimes for temporary use. These memorials are created as part of traditional mourning rituals and acts of remembrance, but are not limited to formally consecrated sites or the site of the tragedy. They are dispersed throughout the city in everyday and highly public landscapes such as traffic islands, sidewalks, waterfronts, and front yards, demonstrating how ordinary spaces can become sacred. We present several forms of found space community-based living memorials in and around New York City: shrines, viewshed parks, gardens in the public right-of-way, and tree plantings. These cases provide evidence that community-managed memorials are self-organizing, democratic processes which develop independently of state-led memorial initiatives.

**Keywords** Living memorial • Community-managed space • September 11, 2001 • Social meaning • Stewardship • Greening

*Environmental social scientists Erika Svendsen and Lindsay Campbell describe the emergence of found space living memorials after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. They contrast these highly participatory memorialization sites with the more formally designed official World Trade Center memorial, and suggest an important role for environmental stewardship in the form of memorialization in community resilience.*

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With actions ranging from planting a single tree, to creating new parks, to rededicating existing forests, hundreds of stewardship groups across the United States created local living memorials in response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in which four commercial airplanes were hijacked and used as weapons to attack sites of national significance (Svendsen and Campbell 2005, 2010). Despite their abundance, little is known about these dispersed, community-managed sites as they have emerged independently of the national memorials. Public attention as well as scholarly research has focused primarily on the highly visible creation of memorials at the World Trade Center site, the Flight 93 National Memorial, and the Pentagon Memorial. In an effort to better understand how and why people employ their local landscape to memorialize individuals, places, and events we examine 'found space living memorials'—which we define as memorialization sites that are community-managed, re-appropriated from their prior use, often carved out of the public right-of-way, and sometimes for temporary use. These memorials are created as part of traditional mourning rituals, but are not limited to formally consecrated sites or the site of the tragedy. They are dispersed throughout cities in everyday and highly public landscapes such as traffic islands, sidewalks, waterfronts, and front yards, demonstrating how ordinary spaces can become sacred.

We use September 11 as a case study of a perturbance to which people respond in multiple, varied ways, examining the role of environmental stewardship in human psychological recovery after a traumatic event. We juxtapose community-managed sites with a national memorial in order to understand how different forms of memorials serve different functions, have different social meanings, and engage people in different ways. In order to bound the case study considered here, we examine just local memorials created in the New York City metropolitan region and compare them to the national memorial building process at the World Trade Center site (see Svendsen and Campbell 2005, 2010 for other examples from across the US). Participation in memorial-making can range from contributing to a visioning process, to creating, developing, maintaining, and ongoing programming of sites. We present several forms of found space community-based memorials: shrines, viewshed parks, gardens in the public right-of-way, and tree plantings. These cases provide evidence that community-managed memorials are self-organizing, democratic processes, which develop independently of state-led memorial initiatives.

## Stewardship, Resilience and Recovery

In this chapter, we contend that stewardship, or the act of caring for the environment on behalf of a greater public good, is a critical part of our capacity as humans to adjust to an ever-changing world. We consider the emergence of these memorials part of a socio-ecological process of disturbance and resilience. These memorials are the result of spontaneous, self-organizing acts that are motivated by stewards' sense of community and need for healing rituals, and are expressed through myriad relationships with nature (Svendsen and Campbell 2010). Stewards

use their immediate landscape as a mechanism to demonstrate democratic principles, to express personal values, and to foster a collective resilience in the aftermath of a crisis. Stewards are expressing an 'adaptive capacity' that is essential to a healthy society and in some cases to overall ecosystem function (Folke et al. 2003; Gallopin 2006; Tidball and Krasny 2007). The more resilient or adaptive we are, the more likely we are to successfully mediate changes in our environment. How well we manage to adapt depends upon diverse social and biophysical factors. This type of community engagement—which includes human interactions ranging from membership and decision-making to hands-on work—is one way for us to contribute and find meaning within a larger system (Burch and Grove 1993). The act of local memorial-making and stewardship is a non-passive act fundamental to the healing process of those involved (Tidball et al. 2010). Studies of environmental volunteers find that stewardship activities help to lessen feelings of isolation and disempowerment that can lead to depression and anxiety (Sommer et al. 1994; Svendsen and Campbell 2006; Townsend 2006). Furthermore, a study of community garden volunteers found that stewardship can serve a variety of different functions at the individual and collective levels. At the individual level, stewardship can promote relaxation, mitigate stress, create self-confidence, and strengthen sense of control and self-efficacy; at the collective level it can help to establish trust, strengthen social cohesion, share knowledge, and leave a legacy (Svendsen 2009). In the case of September 11, many memorial stewards reported their actions were tied to a personal world view or remembrance of life. These acts of stewardship were expressions of personal longings to spiritually connect with this immense human tragedy and in some small way become a part of the recovery effort.

## Collected Memory and the Pre-memorial Period

Memorials reflect and reinforce the discourses of their creators, the communities in which they are situated, and the broader socio-cultural context. They often represent a highly public and political message (Simpson and Corbridge 2006). Relationships of power, hierarchies, and rule-making affect who has access to, influence over, and control of sacred space (Van der Leeuw 1986). As such, the creation, interpretation, use and stewardship of memorials sites are not without social tensions and controversy (Bosco 2004; Sturken 2004; White 2004). In fact, memorial scholar James Young (1994) suggests that this tension is a necessary part of 'memory work', a way to come to terms with a tragedy or a violent event that may foster societal healing. Further, Young challenges the notion of a unitary, collective memory and views memorial-making as a process for voicing 'collected memory' (Young 1994). Others have suggested that the 'pre-memorial period'—before a formal, centralized, state-led memorial is created—serves as time in which historical narratives are publicly debated and memory work begins (Simpson and Corbridge 2006).

Spontaneous memorials are commonly created by individuals in the immediate aftermath of a tragedy. Spontaneous memorials are temporary shrines and remembrances that are often positioned near the site of tragic events (Foote 1997). Consequently, spontaneous memorials are 'borrowed' landscapes that serve an alternative use to what was originally intended by the state, private owners, or the public (Mayo 1988). In turn, found space memorials can originate as spontaneous memorials, but can last longer and permanently shift the use of the site. Further, while spontaneous memorials are generally created by the acts of individuals interacting with a public space, the found space memorials explored in this chapter are often created through collective action and the work of formal and informal civic groups.

In this study, we suggest that these community-based memorials represent an important part of 'memory work' that is manifested through public acts of stewardship. In many ways, these memorials can be understood within a broader context of democratic processes. These memorials are initiated by civil society and often remain external to traditional, state-led memorial-making. As such, these community-based memorials might be considered as civic innovation, where groups develop place-based strategies in contrast to hierarchical forms of decision-making and planning (Sirianni and Friedland 2001; Taylor 2009). This chapter explores how people use the landscape to remember and reflect as a mourning ritual and in different stages of recovery. It asks what role community-based stewardship of the local environment plays in the memorial-making process. Prior to addressing this question, we present a brief overview of the history of more formal 9/11 memorials in New York City.

## Ground Zero of the Red Zone

Although Ground Zero has become a sacred space, a site of vigil and visitation, and will eventually host the preeminent national memorial to September 11, the opportunities for public engagement in memorial creation are clearly restricted and channelized. A design competition for the memorial was held which received 5,201 submissions from 63 different countries (Lower Manhattan Development Corporation 2003c). While the competition was open to the public, the process was overseen by a hand-picked jury of 13 experts from the art and architecture world, September 11 victim family representatives, Lower Manhattan stakeholders, and representatives from the New York State Governor's and New York City Mayor's offices (Lower Manhattan Development Corporation 2003b). The winning proposal was 'Reflecting Absence' by architect Michael Arad who was later paired with the landscape architect Peter Walker (Lower Manhattan Development Corporation 2004). Sturken (2004) argues that this design competition set off a public debate about 'populism versus elitism' in the process of memorial-making.

A variety of government (such as the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, or LMDC) and nonprofit organizations (such as the Municipal Art Society and Regional Plan Association) worked to engage the public in the visioning and design of the memorial. These groups organized both large-scale, one-time event public input sessions (such as 'Listening to the City', which was convened by the Regional Plan Association and funded in part by LMDC, and brought together more than 5,000 participants on July 20, 2002) as well as more diffuse focus groups, exhibitions, and charettes (such as 'Imagine New York', which was organized by Municipal Art Society in November 2002) (Municipal Art Society 2003). In both cases, online participation was also encouraged through a variety of digital tools used to capture public comment and dialogue.

These various mechanisms were designed to allow public input into the early stages of the process of memorial creation, but ultimately the authority to make project development decisions was vested in a few key stakeholders, including the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Silverstein Properties (the leaseholder of the World Trade Center), and LMDC. Indeed, before any memorial competition was held, LMDC and the Port Authority selected Studio Daniel Liebeskind to create the 'design concept' for the World Trade Center site (Lower Manhattan Development Corporation 2003a). Marita Sturken argues that these constraints trump the creative process of memorial-making, 'In many ways, any memorial design had already been usurped by Liebeskind's master plan for the site, with its discourse of memorialization and its framing of the footprints as the memorial's location'. (2004, p. 321). Setha Low (2004) makes an even stronger critique of this process, arguing that public input was ignored:

> The designation of a memorial design for Ground Zero has been framed by a disruptive tug-of-war for political power…. In this contentious process, the mourning, anger, and need for resolution of local residents and victims' families and friends have been largely forgotten. The outpouring of emotion and ideas for a memorial and for rebuilding downtown from citizens who participated in the Municipal Art Society's 'Imagine New York' program has been ignored or, at the very least, set aside to make way for the desires and fantasies of architects and real estate moguls. Many nonprofit organizations and nearby neighborhoods continue to demand a voice in the formal memorial process, but they have not received official recognition, and there is no indication that local meanings and concerns will be included in the design of the memorial…(Low 2004, p. 327).

Despite early engagement in memorial visioning, there are limited opportunities for members of the public and civic groups to participate in ongoing development of the site.

The terms of the site's redevelopment were to be set not just by democratic deliberation, but by legal mandate, bureaucratic rule, political power, and elite influence. Complicated legal issues related to the terms of Silverstein's lease and insurance were debated in the courtroom as well as in popular media. The nature of the site is such that the memorial is embedded within large-scale infrastructure development and construction projects; for example, Port Authority reconstructed its PATH train hub within the site. Furthermore, physical access onto the site is limited. Annual remembrances held on-site are restricted to dignitaries and families of September

11 victims. While under construction, the site was still used for pilgrimage, with thousands of visitors walking the perimeter and viewing the progress of rebuilding. Currently, the memorial is accessible to the public, while the construction of the museums and adjacent buildings continues. While the physical site and the overall design process were restricted, it is important to be aware of the public's need to access and interact with the site of the tragedy in a tangible, physical way at all stages of the rebuilding.

## Identification of Stewardship Groups and Data Collection

Memorial stewardship groups were identified using a snowball sampling method where interviewees were asked to identify other memorial groups and sites with which they were familiar (Lofland and Lofland 1984). This information was combined with a newspaper search, starting in the metropolitan areas of the three crash sites (New York, Shanksville, PA, and Arlington, VA/Washington, DC), and extending to the northeast states. Field methods for the research included semi-structured interviews, site observation, and photo documentation. The interviews were guided by a social and site assessment protocol that asked social and biophysical questions about the characteristics of the memorial site and stewardship group. We interviewed a total of 117 stewardship groups via multiple interview methods (Table 25.1). The people we interviewed included civic stewards usually working as part of a volunteer, community-based group; local municipal officials who were either pursuing the projects as part of their official duties or in a 'volunteer' capacity; and family members or friends of September 11 victims who were often deeply and personally motivated to create these sites. In all cases, respondents were asked to speak on behalf of their memorial groups. (For full results from the 117 interviews, see Svendsen and Campbell 2010). This chapter focuses on a subset of individual or civic group-led found space memorials that are within the New York City metropolitan region.

**Table 25.1** Data collection methods

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|---|---|
| Stewardship groups interviewed in person with sites that were returned to multiple times over 4 years for observation of events, changes in design and use | 38 |
| Stewardship groups interviewed in-person with sites that were visited one time only | 31 |
| Stewardship groups interviewed by telephone with photos submitted electronically or by mail | 25 |
| Stewardship groups that self-registered using the National Registry protocol form electronically or by mail | 23 |
| Total stewardship groups interviewed | 117 |

## Community-Based Memorials Throughout the New York City Region

The cases presented in this section contrast sharply with the project of national memorialization at the World Trade Center site; they are community-based memorials created on found space within the public realm of New York City. These memorials are located predominantly at sites that are not formally designated as parks. They are small in physical scale, occupying parts of the streetscape, traffic islands, or vacant lots. In terms of temporal scale, these memorials were created shortly after the event and during the 'pre-memorial period', before an official, state-sponsored memorial was dedicated. They range from temporary shrines, to ephemeral performative acts, to sites that were intended to be more permanent even if they lack formal protection. Many of these memorials were created in the viewshed of the World Trade Center site, marking the sites where people witnessed the tragedy and serving as reminders of the Twin Towers where they once stood. Finally, these memorials were initiated by individuals, informal groups, or civic organizations, rather than by government actors. Each of these trends will be more fully explored by examining particular memorial cases.

### *Shrines and Temporary Memorials in the Red Zone*

Perhaps the most visible temporary memorials created after September 11 were the shrines of Union Square Park, which were established in the days immediately following the attacks. Located at 14th Street and Broadway in downtown New York City, Union Square Park serves as a public gathering space. After September 11, access to Lower Manhattan was restricted, and Union Square was one of the publicly accessible parks close to the World Trade Center site. New Yorkers tried to get as close as they could to the site of the tragedy while safely gathering. At first, with telecommunication systems disrupted, the statues, fences, and sidewalks of the park were covered in notices of missing persons and messages to loved ones. As time wore on and some of the missing were realized to be dead, the messages evolved into memorials; the site shifted from one of searching to one of mourning. Flowers were placed at the site, candles were lit, messages of despair and hope were written, and vigils were held. On an everyday basis, Union Square Park is a site for gathering, relaxing, and watching other people and performers. Its use shifted in response to the crisis of September 11, as people re-appropriated the site for their needs. Union Square reminds us that open space in proximity to the site of the event can be transformed to serve as a shrine and a remembrance site—a pattern that has manifested itself in response to other public tragedies, such as the death of Princess Diana or, more recently,

the Virginia Tech University shootings. In each case, a particular segment of the population became stewards of these spaces, keeping watch over the ephemera until it was time for the items to be taken away. On subsequent anniversaries of 9/11, vigils and protests were also held at Union Square Park. Messages of remembrance of the dead were mixed with calls for peace and protest against the various wars in which the US is engaged. The park provides a space for freedom of expression in the public realm.

Other temporary memorials were driven by the impetus of an individual or a group of friends who felt the urgent need to 'do something' after the tragedy. Bianca Bob felt that she could not wait for the memorial at the World Trade Center to be created; she had to respond personally and immediately to the loss of life that occurred on September 11. So she organized the Sunflower Project NYC, an effort to plant sunflower seeds throughout Lower Manhattan's streetscape in whatever available sites she could identify—empty planter boxes, tree pits, and vacant

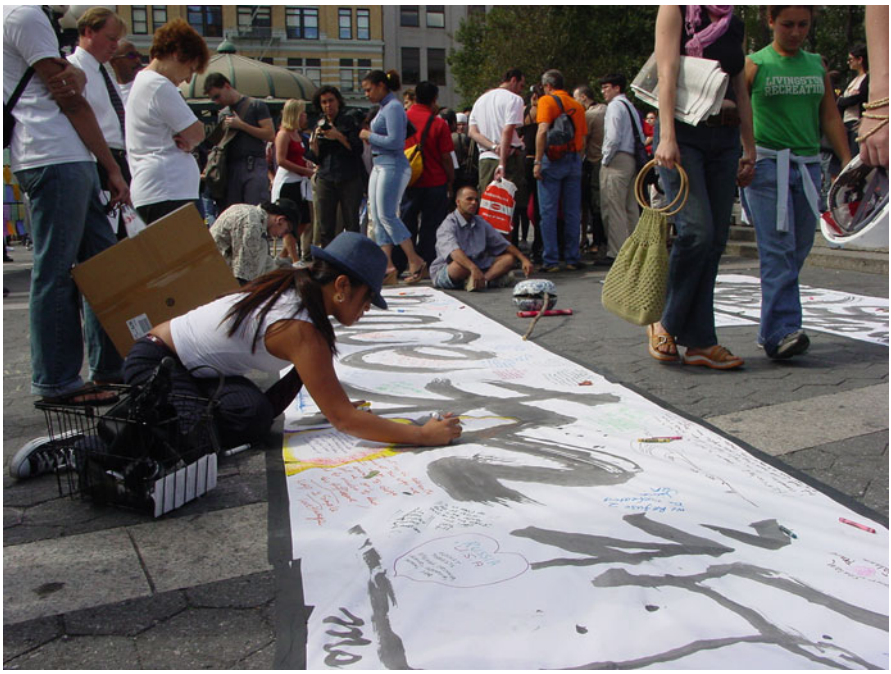

**Fig. 25.1** Members of the public write message of peace at the one year anniversary of September 11 at Union Square Park

lots. Although motivated by a particular tragic event and perhaps an expression of urgent biophilia (see Tidball, Chap. 4, this volume), Bob's efforts recall a civic environmental tradition similar to the work of the guerilla gardeners who planted seed bombs in vacant lots of Manhattan's Lower East Side in the 1970s, in an effort to reclaim and beautify their neighborhoods. Bob created a website and gathered with groups of friends and strangers to walk the streets and plant seeds. Reflecting on her project, she said:

> So many people have been wonderful, really excited, and have helped. It's about personality, communities, and the people that walk by and get involved....A lot of people who have never planted anything ....are involved; it's good for them.

The sunflower plantings were a personal act of remembrance that Bob placed in the public realm. When asked if she considered this effort to be sacred, she said that while it was sacred to her, she recognized that it might not be sacred to many others. These memorials were ephemeral, they might be vandalized, but it was the gesture of caring that mattered to her.

**Fig. 25.2** Bianca Bob and volunteers clearing weeds from a tree pit to plant sunflowers in the spring of 2002

Similar in its physical intervention in the landscape though different in intent, Javier Roux created Suntowers, which was a conceptual art project as much as a memorial. The project involved planting sunflowers on selected Manhattan streets, such that if the World Trade Center were laid on its side from Lower Manhattan to Chelsea, the flowers would trace its outline. Roux was interested in both the act of planting and watering as well as the symbolic form of his piece—which would not be perceptible at street level and was not signed or publicly announced in any way. This individual, artistic impulse—and particularly the impulse to re-create the form of the Twin Towers—was repeated across the country as thousands of people painted, sculpted, quilted, baked, and collaged in remembrance of September 11. Such examples remind us that nature is an important and accessible medium for expression, alongside other artistic media.

## *Viewsheds of the Red Zone: Places Where People Bore Witness*

While proximity to the site of the tragedy clearly matters in the creation of emergent memorials, there were a number of found space memorials radiating out from Lower Manhattan. In particular, memorial sites are found within the viewshed of the World Trade Center, which was formerly visible throughout the metropolitan region. All of these spaces served as witnessing sites on September 11. The Promenade in Brooklyn Heights is a common gathering site for both residents and tourists alike, and it is visited for its striking views of the New York City skyline and harbor. The former shipping piers that sit vacant and unused below the promenade were slated to become part of the 85-acre Brooklyn Bridge Park, which is under construction as of 2010, and in 2001 was still in the early planning stages. An informal group of Brooklynites created a memorial garden of two flower beds planted with daffodils in the shape of the Twin Towers on the unused piers. Planted initially in the fall of 2001, the flowers first bloomed in the spring of 2002. It was replanted for several years after the event, serving as a reminder each spring of both the tragedy and the subsequent human response. A number of gardeners involved in the project felt that it was both an important visual reminder for visitors to the Promenade, but also a personally fulfilling act to engage in the restorative work of planting for spring. Residents could not wait the many years required for the publicly accessible park to be developed; they needed something to do right away in response to the momentous event. While some felt that perhaps the memorial should inform the permanent design of Brooklyn Bridge Park, as the years passed, the plans evolved and the park was designed with more of an emphasis on multiple uses, including active recreation and interaction with the waterfront, rather than memorialization. This case shows that our needs for our urban open spaces are dynamic and shifting over time.

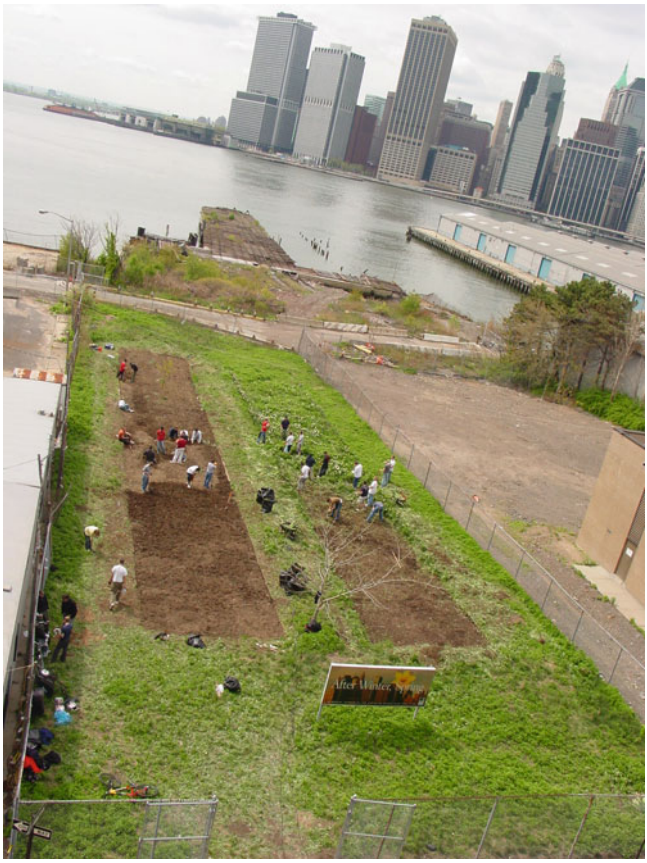

**Fig. 25.3** Stewards working at the Brooklyn Bridge Park Memorial Garden in the summer of 2005

Another viewshed site across Jamaica Bay in the Rockaways—a seaside peninsula that is a part of Queens, NY—was turned into a Waterfront Tribute Park. The development of this memorial was managed by the Rockaway Chamber of Commerce, which sought both to remember September 11 and to enhance and restore a previously vacant and underutilized portion of the waterfront at Beach 116th Street. While this street is the commercial core of their community, centered around the end of the A train subway and a popular beach destination for New York City residents, the memorial site is located on the generally less-visited Jamaica Bay side of the peninsula. The site was always associated with viewing the New York City skyline and the sunset behind it; on September 11, local residents gathered there to witness the attack on and collapse of the World Trade Center. Liz Sulik of the Chamber reflected on the process of the project's implementation, which illustrates the high level of public engagement in local memorial-making:

> The people were so genuinely interested in the process. People showed up at meetings, they didn't just blow them off like you might a civic meeting. They really took a lot of pride, and

> knowing that this was going to be *the* tribute in the Rockaways; that was important to them. And it really was easy; I don't think we had any dissension. Around the table we had people that ordinarily might not have such a good rapport with one another, and yet when we discussed this, everybody was so focused on this. My job was really to bring us back to task and I don't think I had to do that once.

The Chamber had a vision of turning the site into a waterfront access park, with a canoe/kayak put-in and views of the bay and its wildlife. Although it prominently features a sculptural memorial to September 11, the site also blends other local tragedies into its memorialization. As it was being created, local residents and groups requested to purchase memorial bricks for loved ones who died due to other causes. This site clearly demonstrates the way in which living memorials become embedded in their local communities, and are the product of multiple, often complementary impulses.

## *The Red Zone Comes Home*

In contrast to viewshed memorials, which are permanently in dialogue with the former World Trade Center site, some found space memorials are intended to serve as local gathering spaces for a particular community near where residents live, embedded within their everyday landscapes. Staten Island is one of the five boroughs of New York City and is the home of many of the city's police officers and fire fighters; it was heavily impacted by September 11, losing 274 residents—both civilian and service personnel. Staten Island can be examined as a case study of the number and diversity of community-based memorials that emerged. One of the Staten Island chapters of the Federated Garden Clubs of New York State created a Healing Garden on a formerly largely barren traffic island on busy access streets to the Staten Island Expressway. While the gardeners did cite the importance of its public visibility, the selection of the site was not simply opportunistic. This traffic island is adjacent to a local firehouse that lost 11 firefighters on September 11 and is the location of an older stone memorial to firefighters killed in the line of duty. The garden was intended both for visual impact as well as to provide an opportunity to engage widows of September 11 and other residents in the planting and maintenance of the site. Overall, the garden was an attempt to help heal the local community by specifically memorializing Staten Island victims through the planting of smoke trees in their memory, and by giving others an opportunity to help in the creation and continuation of the memorial.

Angels' Circle, another local memorial on Staten Island, is within the public right-of-way just a few miles down the road from the Healing Garden. Wendy Pelligrino transformed the traffic island across the street from her house into this tiny, heavily landscaped, fenced, and shrine-like memorial to Staten Island victims of September 11. Each victim is individually memorialized with a stone or grave candle, and the entire site is decorated for Christian and secular holidays as a way of marking time and remembering the dead in connection with important days. Although Pelligrino is personally responsible for the site's constant tending and upkeep, visitors and neighbors have various ways of interacting with the memorial. Under the watchful gaze of a surveillance camera, they are invited to visit and walk through space; some leave

mementos and pictures. A message board and mailbox are available for family members and anonymous visitors to leave messages to each other. A local nursery donates plant materials, with the landscape shifting almost as frequently as the decorations. Pelligrino's intense personal investment, resources, and time given to the maintenance of this site provide a means of coping with tragedy of September 11 while creating a local sacred space specifically for Staten Island victims.

These are just two examples of living memorials that abound on Staten Island. There is also a memorial in a wooded walk at the Staten Island Botanic Garden; a new waterfront Seaside Nature Park created by a group of senior citizens called Turnaround Friends, Inc; a memorial flagpole placed at the Crescent Beach; and patriotic and memorial murals scattered throughout the island. Staten Island is highlighted not for its exceptionalism; indeed, similar clusters of memorials can be found throughout New Jersey, Long Island, Boston, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Southern California (see Svendsen and Campbell 2006). Rather, this case is an illustrative example of local residents who self-organize to create remembrances in their own communities and on their own terms. Indeed, memorials can be found across the country at both historic sites of local significance (such as town halls and schools) as well as at newly emerging nodes (places where people work, shop, and drive), and even when there is seemingly hardly any space at all.

Even a single tree planted with a particular intention can serve as a public memorial and can evoke a sense of stewardship and care. In Long Island City—a heavily industrial neighborhood in Queens that is crisscrossed with subways tracks, the Long Island Railroad, bridges, and highways—a memorial street tree was planted in memory of Michael E. Brennan, a firefighter who died on September 11. The planting was initiated by students at the Robert F. Wagner School, and was conducted in partnership with the Long Island City Roots community garden and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. While hundreds of schools across the country planted memorial trees and tended gardens as living memorials to September 11, this urban school did not have any available grounds on which to create a memorial. So the students partnered with the garden—and through working with the garden members and the Parks Department, they were able to get permission to dedicate and plant a street tree just in front of the garden. At the dedication, hundreds of students, teachers, family members, Parks Department staff, and community members stood in the sidewalks and streets to hear remarks and tie yellow ribbons of remembrance on the young sapling. Michael Brennan's brother spoke at the dedication:

> It sort of helps the healing process to know that so many people have come together to make this day possible. After attending so many memorials and funerals over the past seven months, this is more or less a bright day for us here. We look forward to a future of hope. That's what this garden is going to represent too: a new beginning, a fresh start, a look to what's before us.

In this sense, the act of planting a tree as a continued commitment to the future—in remembrance and honor of the past—makes stewards of all those who attended this special service. What this case reinforces is that the significance of the memorial is not embedded solely in the formality of the design. Rather, the ritual act of 'setting aside', the collective decision to create a remembrance, the selection of a site close to home, and the ongoing care for that site are all sources of meaning in local memorials.

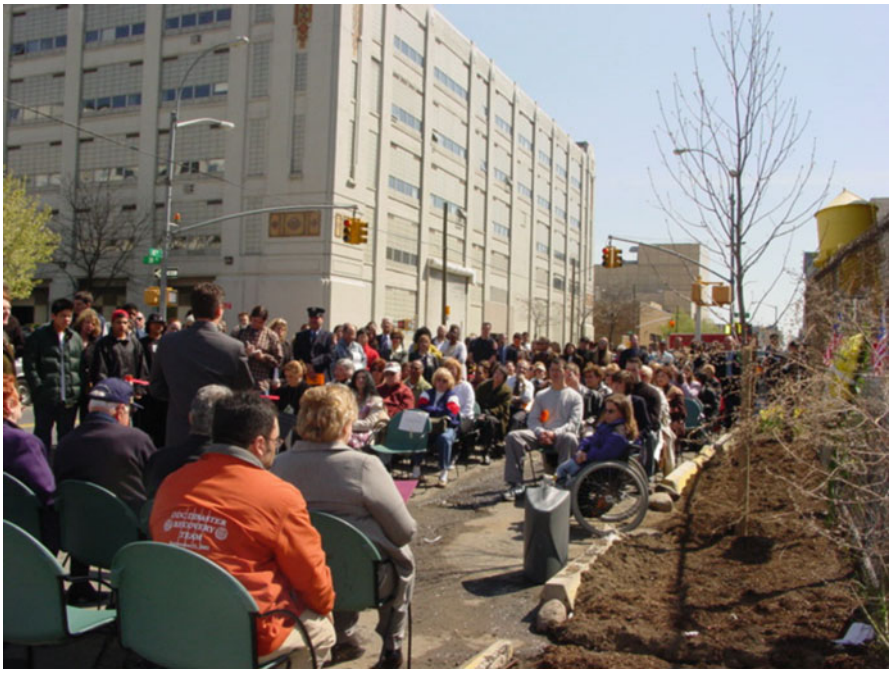

**Fig. 25.4** Crowds sitting and standing in the street at the Michael E. Brennan memorial tree dedication in April 2002

## Discussion and Concluding Remarks

As evidenced by these memorials, people use local environments as an expression of social meanings as well as a means to share viewpoints and sympathies with a broader public sphere. The sites presented here are not meant to be an exhaustive typology, but rather an exploration of some of the observed themes in emergent, found space memorials. For some individuals and groups, nature serves as a material or a means of expression that is no different from any other medium for expression and creativity—such as painting a canvas or making a sculpture. Indeed, further research of non-nature based memorials to September 11 (including quilts, songs, road rededications, memorial scholarships, donations, and so on) could provide nuance to the urgent biophilia hypothesis (Tidball, Chap. 4, this volume). However, there are other examples of stewards who very deliberately use nature to symbolize life, death, and renewal. Some leave or plant flowers or create shrines as intimately personal acts, using natural elements and relics as symbols of the life cycle and tokens of beauty. Further, there are aspects of living memorials that are unique—by being in the public realm they are inherently witnessed by many others who may or may not be directly involved in their creation. Thus, whether intentionally or not,

they engage a broad public. They are also often created collaboratively by informal groups or nonprofits working together, because a pooling of resources is required to create or transform these spaces. Thus, the spaces differ from the artist's canvas as they require sustained care over time. A park or garden cannot maintain itself; it must be visited and deliberately stewarded. This ongoing interaction stretches the duration of the memorialization process.

Stewardship can be enacted as both an act of personal recovery and a mechanism for strengthening community ties and social cohesion (see Okvat and Zautra, Chap. 5, and Wals and van der Waal, Chap. 29, this volume). It is suggested here that emergent acts of stewardship may contribute to collective resilience as stewardship engages a broader public (see also, Tidball and Krasny, Chaps. 1 and 2, this volume). While this type of resilience can have a community-wide impact, the benefits are difficult to quantify as they reside in the hearts and minds of individuals. Local memorials are reflections of world views, values, and adaptive capacity. How can we be assured that public, community-based memorials can accommodate a range of expressions and still resonate with an individual's personal journey of recovery? How might these memorials continue to serve the local community and strengthen individual and community resilience long after the memorial has been dedicated?

One of the questions raised by this study is whether policy or planning can build upon this emergent or organic stewardship in the immediate aftermath of a disturbance or even outside of the context of a post-crisis situation. This suggests the need for disaster planning and recovery models to be flexible and fluid as they respond to the recovery needs of a community—observing the ways that people reclaim their public landscape through memorial-making. The power of these spaces resides in their civic-led and decentralized decision-making structure; attempts to support or formalize them as part of memory work must keep this foremost in mind. It is important to note that some of these efforts are fleeting, while others become longer-term building blocks for community recovery. Longitudinal research is required to examine whether sites that emerge due to urgent needs to express and remember become permanently embedded in landscape. Much remains to be learned about how these sites are used, and perhaps reinterpreted and again re-appropriated over time. Public memorials can be controversial as messages may be perceived as too personalized, or as memorials become too frequent in the landscape and compete with other demands for public land use. This leads us to a final set of questions: at what point and why does a community change in terms of its need for local memorials? While these memorials are cultivated and encouraged in the early stages of disaster recovery, how is social meaning mediated over time?

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