

# Out & About

# NY @ Ground Zero

November 18, 2001

**O**n a crisp autumn weekend, I took advantage of airfare and hotels priced at giveaway rates to visit New York City. I went there with my son, Jason and a running buddy, Cory Hlavka. We left early on November 16, arriving at our hotel in mid-town Manhattan by late morning.

After checking in to The Hilton and Towers (where we paid only \$95 per night), we headed south down the Avenue of the Americas to jog the five miles to the now infamous Ground Zero. It was a perfect day for a run – bright sun, light breezes from the south and temperatures in the 50s. Occasionally, we could detect the smell of the smoldering rubble – like the odor of a wet campfire. As we passed Macy's department store, the hustle of shoppers

seemed incongruent with horror that had unfolded just a few miles away. The smell became stronger as we entered SoHo and Greenwich Village.

We observed our first definitive sign of the loss and destruction when we came upon the firehouse that was first to respond to the attack (see first picture). The station was a little more than a mile from the Twin Towers and it had been turned into a shrine honoring firefighters-turned-heroes who sacrificed all on a

cade was covered with fading missing person posters and the only way to witness the carnage from the attack was



to wait for a turn to peer through gaps in what could be called America's Wailing Wall. It defied comprehension that what we were seeing was actually four blocks from where the Towers once stood. On that crisp, sunny day we saw the NYFD rescue squad waiting with the engine running. The workers had recovered five more bodies.

No matter how much I saw on TV, nothing could compare to the massiveness of the

(over)



different sunny day. Candles, notes, posters, and flowers, which served as a visual expression of loss and grief shared, surrounded their photos – all eleven – by all. A silent pall overtook us as we approached the barricaded street – we were still six blocks from the fallen towers. Even though the foot traffic was considerably heavier, no one spoke. The fence barri-



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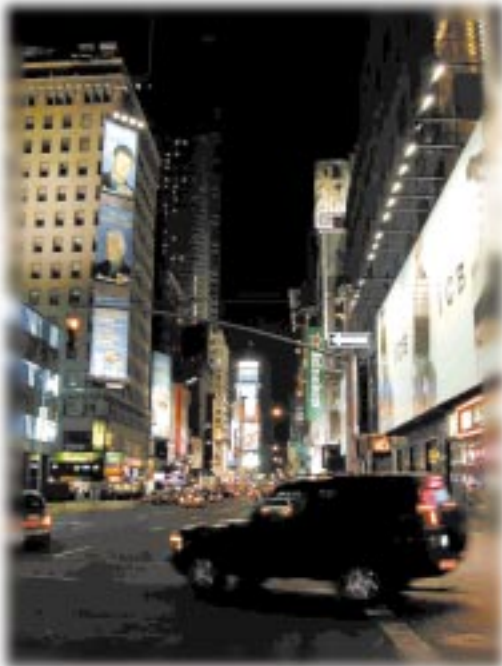
destruction I witnessed. It reminded me of the first time I saw the Grand Canyon. As no photos could provide the same experience of vastness that you feel from the Canyon, the same can be said for the Twin Tower tragedy.

Our band of three said little during the hour hike back to our hotel. Once we made it to Times Square, life seemed almost normal – stores were preparing for the holiday shopping season. Back at the hotel, cheerleaders were



spirit. A recent Indiana University study found that over 75% of Americans made donations following September 11. Standing in that crowd of 6,000 runners in a city that had so recently been brought to its knees, I truly felt privileged to be an American.

On Sunday morning I joined six thousand runners and walkers and ran a four-mile fund raising race in Central Park. The cause was to raise funds for food delivery for the disabled and shut-ins – more evidence of America's giving



I would highly recommend traveling to New York City – *the experience will be unforgettable.*

Additional photos from my own NY experience are posted on our web site at [toyourwealth.com](http://toyourwealth.com). ▲

excitedly preparing for the Macy's Day Parade coming up in a few days. We went for a run in Central Park and observed the New Yorkers doing what they force themselves to do – getting on with their lives – families together, children playing.

