

In Prince Edward Island, Cheryl Boyle and her friends baked over 200 apple pies and sent them to a restaurant serving relief workers at Ground Zero. High-rigging Mohawks from the Oka Reserve in Quebec joined with some 200 other Canadian ironworkers to dismantle the structure of the World Trade Center, which they had helped erect years before.

Close to \$3 million was forwarded to the U.S. United Way's September 11 Fund through a special donor service set up by Canada's United Way/Centraide. The Canadian Red Cross launched a U.S. appeal, which raised \$10 million in less than six weeks for initial emergency relief and support, and for long-term psychological and social help to the estimated 50 000 directly affected individuals, including relief workers.

### In praise of heroes

Vancouver firefighters initiated a fundraising campaign for the families of their dead "brothers" in New York. The people of Vancouver responded, donating \$600 000 within 12 hours. Stockbrokers offered hundred-dollar bills, schoolchildren emptied their piggy banks and a University of British Columbia student handed over his bus fare.

The cheque was presented at an emotional ceremony at the Canadian Consulate General in mid-Manhattan, where burly, uniformed New York

and Vancouver firefighters openly wept and hugged each other.

Beyond cash donations and assistance to stranded passengers, professional skills were offered to the New York victims of September 11.

The Salvation Army provided personnel and volunteers to work at and near Ground Zero. So did the Canadian Red Cross, which sent 77 highly trained and mostly volunteer individuals from its disaster response team. Team members left their regular jobs in nursing, firefighting or counselling to work three-week shifts in the ruins of the World Trade Center. Team member Linda Hendrie helped the American Red Cross dispense emergency funds so that survivors could meet initial needs, such as paying utility bills or buying food and clothing.

Ontario's chief and deputy coroners worked with victims' families and Canadian Consulate General staff in New York, as did counsellors from Quebec. "We acted as a kind of conduit," says Dr. James Young, Ontario's Chief Coroner. "We were a source of counsel and expertise,

helping Consulate staff deal with the families, New York authorities and media."

Their expertise ensured that full information was provided to the appropriate authorities, and this helped maximize the chances that a loved one would be identified. In addition, they explained the recovery operations under way, and this helped families understand the probability of the death of husbands or wives, sons or daughters; it also helped them acknowledge the still-harsher reality that the remains of their loved ones might never be found. At the last count, 23 Canadian victims are presumed dead.

There were innumerable gestures of compassion, kindness, generosity and courage in the aftermath of the events of September 11. They demonstrate that out of agonizing horror the human capacity for decency and goodness can shine, crossing borders, nationalities, religions and ethnic groups. Canadians rallied to show their American neighbours that they cared, that a friend in need is a friend indeed. 🍁



In London, Ontario, Kim Nichols gives blood as Morgan Nichols (top) and Maddie Speller look on.



photos: CANAPRESS