

Lessons of Hope

By Margaret Costello

With a phone gripped in each hand, LaToya Pierre '02 stared at the image of the World Trade Towers smoldering on her television screen. She dialed a friend on campus with her cell phone, while using her landline phone to reach another. Moments later, she dropped both to the floor as the first tower collapsed before her eyes.

After pulling an all-nighter, Nashonie Chang '02 was in her apartment preparing for an overdue nap when she heard the newscast of the disaster. It would be a long time before she could rest easy again.

It was 9:15 p.m. in Hong Kong when study-abroad student Jayson Weinstein '03 received a series of instant messages from his cousin in Washington, D.C., giving a detailed account of the terrorist attacks as they unfolded. Simultaneously, his

"We must support each other, even if we have no personal connection to the tragedies still unfolding," Shaw told those gathered in the chapel on September 11. "This is a time of confusion and fear for all of us. We all need a friendly hand."

The University provided services to meet the immediate and long-term needs of the campus community. A fund was established to help students who were directly affected by the attacks. Students concerned about the welfare of family and friends were invited to make phone calls at the Telefund Office, the Office of Student Affairs, and the Schine Student Center. Counselors offered emotional support to students at Schine, while some students sought more individualized help at the Counseling Center. "We tried to make clear to the entire campus that it's normal to be upset right now," says Rebecca Dayton, the center's clinical director. The Counseling Center posted an online list of common reactions to the tragedies as well as activities to help people alleviate stress and work through their emotions.

The campus community and alumni also turned to the Internet for information about special events and University-

Number of students who received help at the SU Counseling Center: **33**

In response to September 11, the SU community transforms terror into togetherness and understanding

mother called with the same information. But it wasn't until he saw the TV coverage a few moments later that he truly began to fathom their reports.

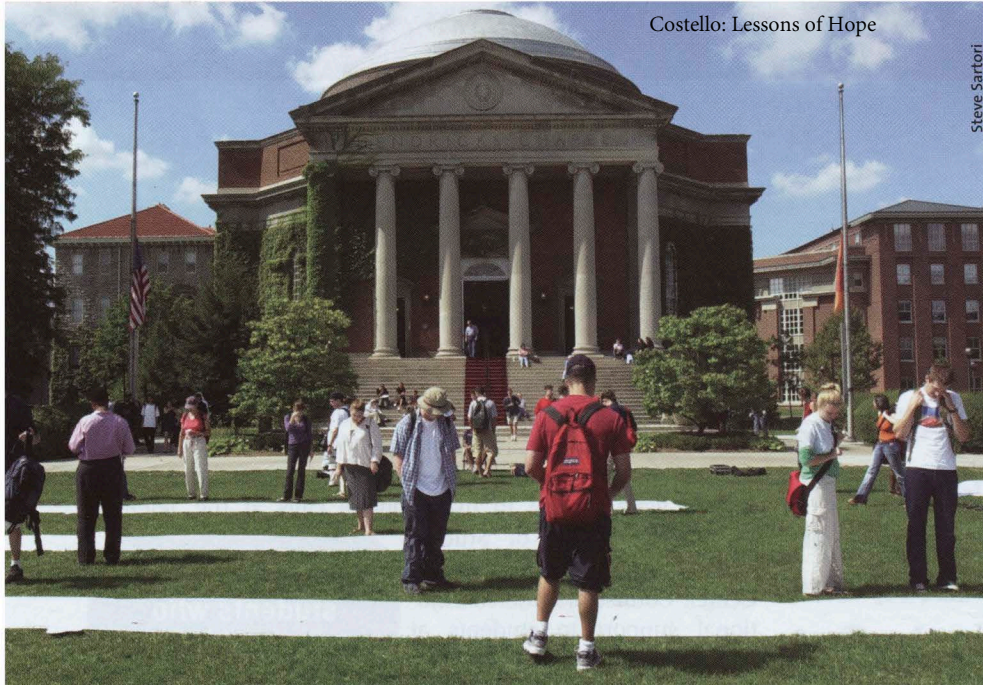
While the images of September 11 won't soon fade, SU students have refocused their energies on continuing schoolwork, trying to understand the terrorists' motivations, following the American government's response, and assisting those who were directly affected. "The students have really supported one another," says Barry L. Wells, senior vice president and dean of student affairs. Throughout this ordeal, students demonstrated the University's core values of caring, diversity, and service, he adds. "The entire University community," Wells says, "has been innovative in providing a variety of responses to the terrorist attacks."

The campus community rallied together by sponsoring blood drives, donating thousands of dollars, holding memorial services, and collecting supplies for rescue workers. Faculty members shared their expertise with news reporters and in public forums. The University immediately initiated special support services, and Chancellor Kenneth A. Shaw, Hendricks Chapel Dean Thomas V. Wolfe, and University spokesman Kevin Morrow gave daily crisis updates in Hendricks Chapel.

wide efforts to benefit the victims' families and the rescue workers in New York City, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C. Within a week of the attacks, SU posted the names of alumni who were dead, missing, or safe—revising the list as new information became available. The University sent out e-mail updates at least once a day and offered live web casts of the daily crisis reports. Alumni and students were invited to post their reflections on the web site, where many people worldwide offered condolences to victims' families, shared memories of the deceased, and detailed their own September 11 experiences.

Thousands of students, faculty, and staff attended candlelight services held on campus in the weeks following the tragedies. Nearly 2,000 people gathered outside Hendricks Chapel for a vigil sponsored by the Student Association (SA). "We felt it was important to allow students a chance to grieve," says SA president Ben Riemer '02. "It turned out to be a great community-building event."

The Student Association also organized a project called Sheets of Expression that recognized the wide variety of individual voices within the University community. For several days, students and other members of Syracuse University



Students on the Quad read messages written on the Sheets of Expression.

penned messages of encouragement, disillusionment, patriotism, faith, retribution, and peace on large white sheets spread out on the Quad lawn. Drawings depicted such images as a dove shedding a tear, flames and smoke engulfing the World Trade Towers and the Pentagon, and American flags. Some people crafted poems and personal messages or added familiar song lyrics and quotations. "I just wrote from the heart," says Jen Musat '04. After completing her message, she spent several minutes lingering over the banners to read other people's comments. "It's kind of therapeutic," she says.

Yards of white ribbon used by the College of Human Services and Health Professions to create pins of peace: 1,260
Number of pins: 6,480

Meghan Rubado '04, a resident advisor in Shaw residence hall, spent much of her time helping freshmen on her floor deal with their anxieties while they tried to locate family and friends. "Once they found out their families were safe, things calmed down some," Rubado says. "When this kind of crisis is all around you, it makes you stop everything." She says writing down a message on the sheets helped her sort through her emotions about the attack. The sheets, covered with thousands of messages and drawings,

were displayed in the Schine Student Center. One of the sheets was later presented to New York State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, whose home district includes the World Trade Center.

Thousands of people on campus wore white-ribbon pins as a unifying symbol of peace and to commemorate the victims of the attacks. "We felt that we

needed to do something to express ourselves here on campus," says Wendy Loughlin, director of communications at the College of Human Services and Health Professions. The college decided on a white-ribbon campaign because it was simple and conveyed a message of peace, Loughlin says. A handful of people in the office scrambled to purchase 40 rolls of ribbon and boxes of pins. "By Wednesday all of the ribbon was gone, so we had to go back to the stores for more," Loughlin says. "People on campus were really positive about it. They were happy to wear something that showed their sentiment."

On September 20, hundreds of University members journeyed down the Hill to join nearly 10,000 Syracuse-area residents in Clinton Square for "We Stand Together: A Gathering of Hope and Healing." The remembrance service opened with a parade of more than 500 firefighters from approximately 40 departments, who were greeted by the crowd



A student volunteer assembles white-ribbon pins in the Schine Student Center, as a passerby takes one to wear.

with thunderous applause and cheers of appreciation. People of all ages waved flags as they sang along with the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra's medley of American classics.

The crowd's patriotism never wavered throughout the 90-minute program, as speakers of all creeds and ethnicities shared prayers and words of comfort. Native American performer Joanne Shenandoah, a 2000 Grammy nominee, sang "Wipe Away Your Tears," and several community choirs also performed. As night fell across the square, a flame passed from neighbor to neighbor, uniting the crowd with the glow of candles and a sense of shared responsibility to keep the fires burning.

The nation saw the patriotic spirit of the SU campus when ESPN televised the Orangemen's football game against the Auburn Tigers, the first public appearance for the teams following the attacks. Before the game, Otto the Orange and the SU cheerleading squad placed American flags on each of the 50,000 seats in the Carrier Dome. Spectators waved their flags during a special pregame show featuring the Pride of the Orange Marching Band. The musicians performed "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "God Bless America" as they moved into formations that created the letters USA and an outline of New York State. The pregame show also featured an appearance by New York Governor George Pataki, who spoke to the crowd of more than 43,000. Meanwhile, about 150 SU student athletes collected nearly \$10,000 in donations from fans for the University's annual Dollar Day at the Dome. A few blocks away, sorority sisters from Delta Delta Delta washed cars, earning more than \$1,000 for the American Red Cross.

In addition to raising money, the University was quick to respond in other

ways to the needs of victims and rescue workers. When emergency management officials at the New York City disaster site said the rescue crews needed clothes, the campus community donated enough T-shirts and socks in 24 hours to fill a 16-foot truck. A tractor-trailer transported the clothing to rescue workers in New York City, who had to change their clothes hourly. Many donors wrote inspirational messages on the clothes. Students, faculty, and staff also gave more than 1,500 toiletry items that were sent to crews in New York City and Washington, D.C., whose members included alumni, Army ROTC cadets, and SU staff.

Back on campus, a blood drive already scheduled at the Maxwell School extended its hours to accommodate an unexpected 3,000 people, some of whom had to be redirected to other drives. The

Army ROTC also sponsored a blood drive in the Schine Student Center, and again the response was tremendous. "We had to make signs at the start of the day telling people we had reached maximum capacity," says Army ROTC cadet Gregory Goodwin '02, a student blood drive organizer. Between the two campus drives, the American Red Cross collected 174 pints of blood, in addition to building up its donor lists for future drives. "It was an amazing display of how Americans come together in a time of crisis," Goodwin says. "We were glad to do our part."

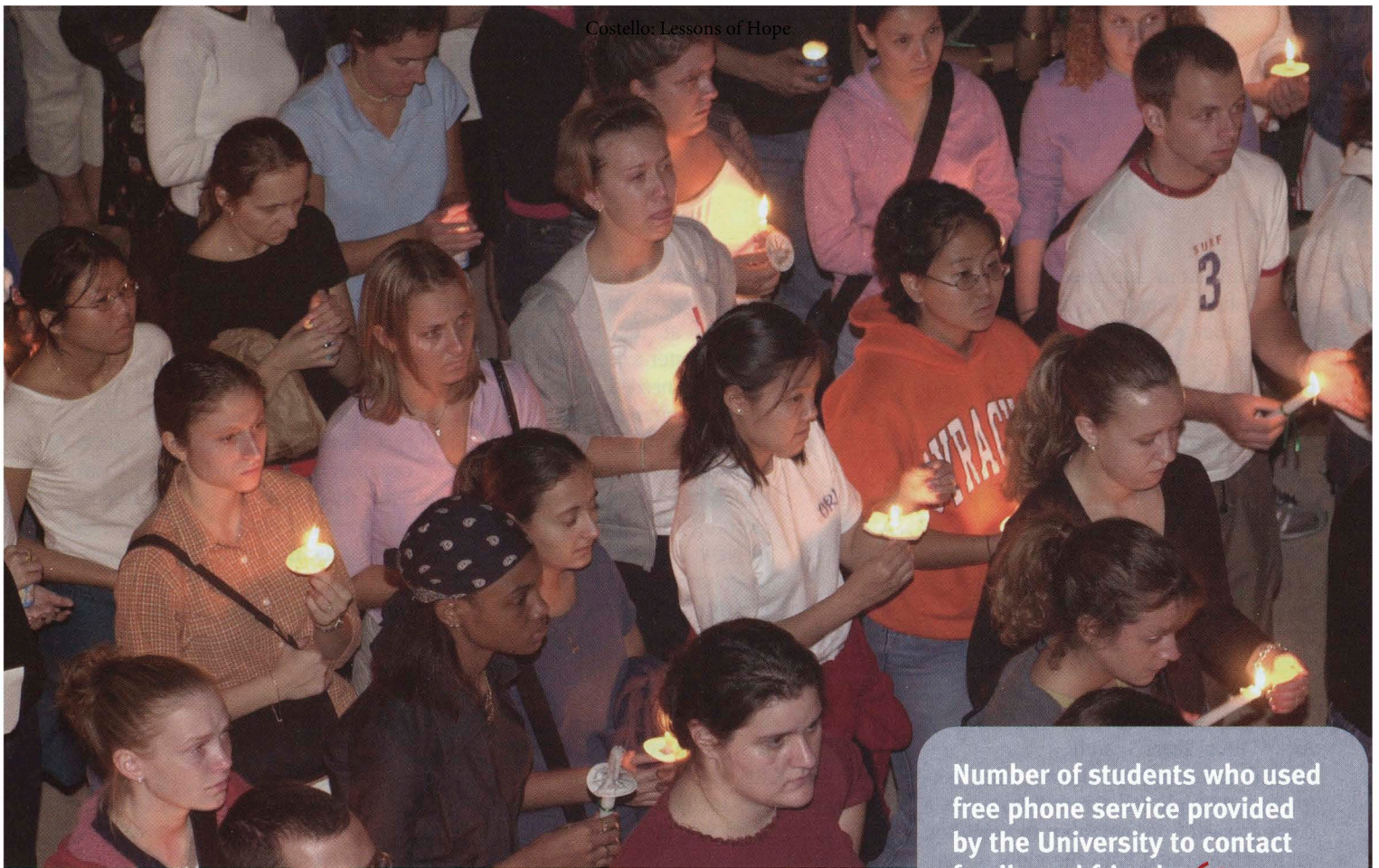
Promoting Understanding

A higher education institution such as Syracuse University also plays a unique role in helping people understand international crises, says Chancellor Shaw. In a message to the SU community, Shaw described universities as places "where

"It was an amazing display of how Americans come together in a time of crisis."



Students light candles during a vigil outside Hendricks Chapel.



Students and other members of the University community gather at a candlelight vigil.

Number of students who used free phone service provided by the University to contact family and friends: **69**

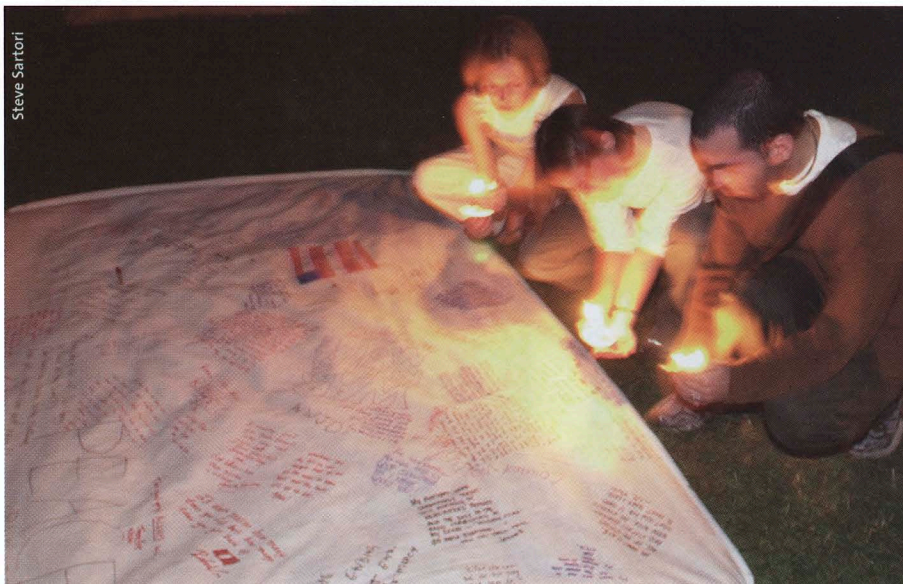
the search for truth can go on, unhindered by fear of reprisal." He described some of the challenges that students and the country would face, including the balance between national security and personal liberty, military attacks versus diplomatic actions, and the expression of patriotism without squelching diverse opinions.

To encourage a "spirited dialogue" on such issues, a committee chaired by David Rubin, dean of the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, developed a series of seven University Forums on Terrorism. "It's our intention that the forums provide additional facts and perspectives on many aspects of

this terrible event, and the response of the United States to it," Rubin says. "In this way, we hope to enrich the debate on campus." The first program, "Some Origins of the Crisis," featured a panel of three faculty members who spoke about Islam versus religious extremism, cultural views on religion and violence, and U.S. relations with Arab countries. Other forums dealt with the global response to terrorism, bioterrorism, balancing civil liberties and national security, and wartime media coverage.

Because Muslims at SU and around the country suddenly had to distinguish themselves from the terrorists and defend their religious beliefs, the University's Muslim Student Organization held "A Public Forum on Islam." The organization hoped to educate the campus community about Muslims and clear up misconceptions about Islam stemming from the terrorist attacks.

Ahmed Kobeisy, Imam of the Islamic Society of Central New York and Islamic chaplain at SU, explained the differences between people who call themselves Muslims and the religion itself. He pointed out the inaccuracies of some



Students illuminate the Sheets of Expression with candles.

Total funds collected
for charities by five campus
organizations: **\$13,808.85**

media accounts, which referred to the attacks as being committed by Islamic terrorists. "There is nothing in the sacred Islamic texts that supports such terrorism," Kobeisy said. "A Muslim is one who simply claims to be a follower of Islam." He said the terrorists are extremists whose actions go against Islamic law and who are not representative of the majority of the world's Muslims. For example, the hijackers killed themselves and more than 3,500 people. Islamic law forbids suicide, and those who commit such an act find punishment, not glory, in the hereafter, Kobeisy said. "What kills one soul is equal to killing all of humanity," he said.

Amber Nizami, a second-year law student and head of the Islamic Law Society, prepared and distributed a fact sheet on Islam and *jihad* for forum participants. Kobeisy also defined Islamic terms that surfaced in mainstream media coverage, such as *fatwa* (a religious verdict about a circumstance issued by an Islamic scholar or council) and *jihad* (a struggle, either internal or external in nature, such as a struggle to resist lustful or material temptations). "*Jihad* does not mean Holy War," Kobeisy said. "There's no holiness attached to war at all. War is ugly, not holy."



A volunteer at the Center for Public and Community Service bags donated socks and T-shirts for rescue workers in New York City.

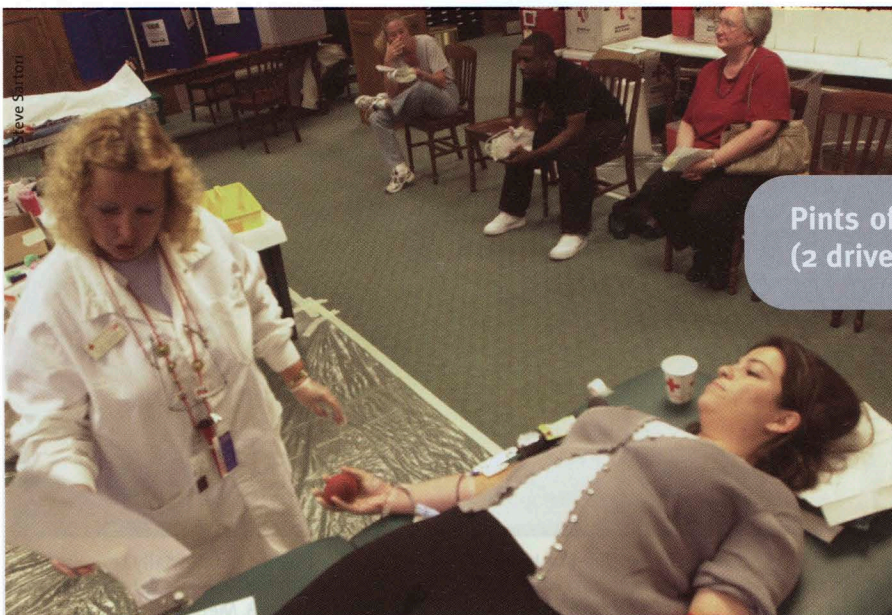
At a Light Work exhibition in the Robert B. Menschel Media Center, members of the University community saw the devastating effects that war has had on the people of Afghanistan. Human rights activist and internationally renowned photographer Fazal Sheikh captured the plight of refugees near the country's northern border with Pakistan through a series of images and narratives. "Fazal Sheikh understands the power of conflicting emotions and has tried to illuminate this seemingly unresolvable global friction," says Jeffrey Hoone, director of Light Work. "His effort shows a commitment to hope and healing rarely achieved by an artist."

International Concerns

Because of a general uneasiness about the threat of terrorism, the staff of the Slutzker Center for International Services sent a special alert to international students on campus that offered general safety tips. It also outlined suggestions to help them blend in and therefore diminish the likelihood that they would be targeted for acts of violence or harassment. Suggestions included speaking in English, dressing in American fashions, and avoiding dance clubs, bars, and other places where excessive drinking might occur. "It was sent out as a preventive measure and to show that we care about our students," says Patricia Burak, director of the international students office.

Six Arab students withdrew from Syracuse University after the attacks because their parents wanted them home, Burak says. However, she says the office has not

received reports of any international students being harassed. Instead, she has fielded phone calls from people on campus who wanted to voice their support. "We've had several faculty members and American students express concern about the welfare of the international students," Burak says. "The University community is worried about them and hopeful that they will remain here on campus to continue their studies."



An American Red Cross worker checks on a donor at a campus blood drive.

Pints of blood collected
(2 drives): **174**

The parents of Kiran Raj, a first-year graduate student in electrical engineering, were keeping tabs on what was happening in the United States from their home in India. They watched the events unfold in New York City and Washington, D.C., and grew concerned over the welfare of their son. Raj assured his parents that he and his friends were safe. "This isn't just affecting America," Raj says. "It's a jolt to humanity. Everyone's affected."

SU students studying abroad this semester restricted some of their usual behaviors and took extra precautions. Brian Morris '03, who is studying in Hong Kong, says the attacks made him more aware of his surroundings. He says, for example, that he's now less likely to hang out with a group of Americans or in places popular with Americans or European visitors. "I was astonished that someone could mastermind an event this large with such a horrible outcome," Morris says. "The most difficult thing is the uncertainty about the future—will the U.S. Embassy here or any other American interests be a target?"

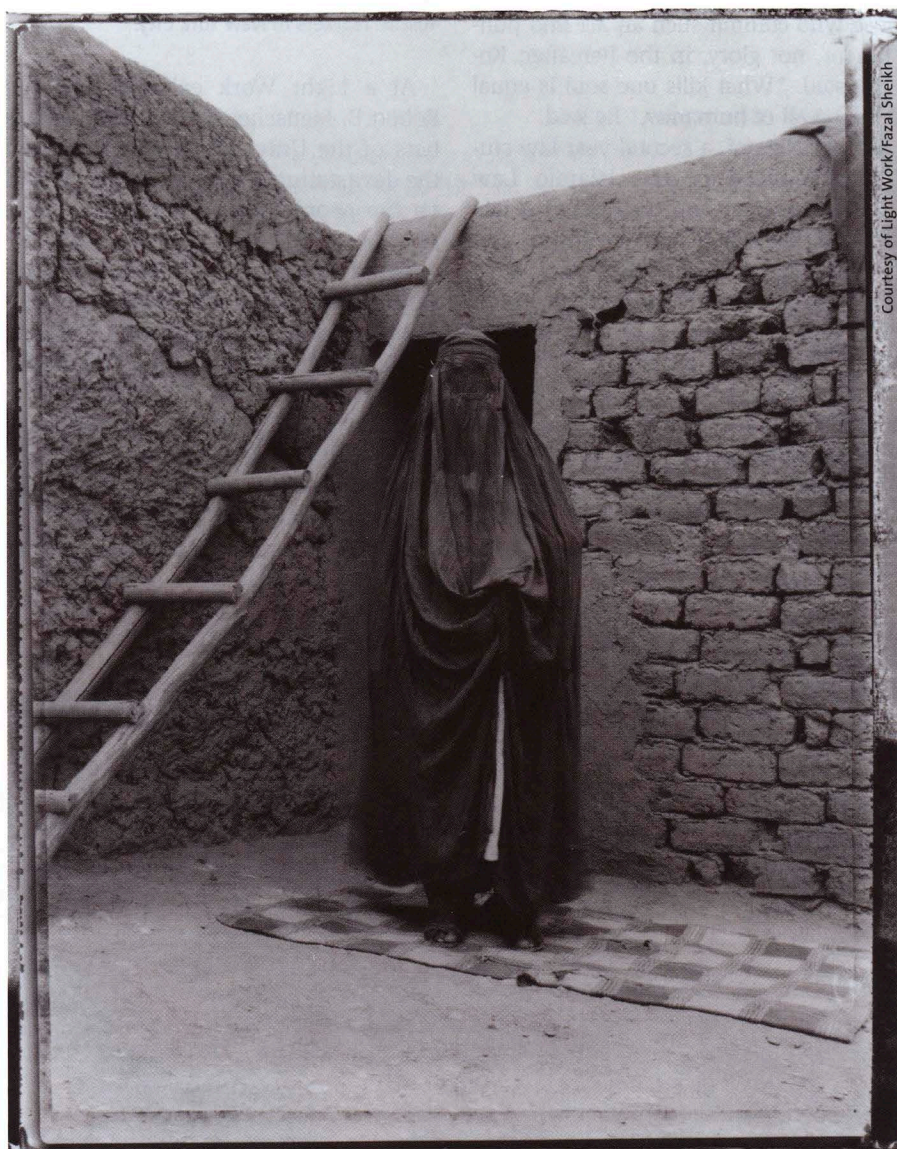
Syracuse University students studying abroad in Madrid, Florence, London, and Strasbourg also experienced the impact of the terrorist actions. A handful of students were so shaken by the attacks that they decided to return home. But most chose to stay in their respective international programs for the semester. They mourned their nation's loss from afar through memorial services and special gatherings to discuss the tragedies.

Elizabeth Shedd, who is studying in Strasbourg, France, attended a memorial concert in a city cathedral with more than 2,000 people, and she joined 200 others in observing three minutes of silence outside the U.S. Consulate General. "The pain and shock of the attacks on the 11th were lessened considerably by the response of the French people," Shedd says. "Everyone from my host mother to the woman who sold me a cell phone showered me with sympathy, and I'm really grateful for it."

Overcoming Tragedy

For some SU students, the events of September 11 have forced a postponement of their educational plans. The University will afford special financial consideration to any student who lost a supporting parent, guardian, or spouse. Those who took a leave of absence for the fall semester were eligible to receive

a grant for all pending charges for the semester and will be eligible to receive special financial consideration for the spring 2002 term. "We want to assure these students that financial support will be there when they are ready to return to Syracuse University to complete their studies," says Christopher Walsh, executive director of financial aid services. To provide this assistance, the Chancellor created the Syracuse



Abdul Shakour's eldest wife, Najiba is a toned silver gelatin print by internationally renowned photographer Fazal Sheikh. It is part of Sheikh's exhibition, "The Victor Weeps: Afghanistan," which is on display through December 31 at Light Work in the Robert B. Menschel Media Center on campus.

September 11th Fund

The Syracuse University September 11th Fund provides financial assistance to students directly affected by the terrorist attacks, so they can continue their education at SU.

Phone 1-888-352-9535 or e-mail giving@syr.edu for more information.

University September 11th Fund, which is being supported by donations from alumni, students, faculty, and friends of the University.

For most of the campus, life is returning to normal as fewer updates about the incidents are circulated, and conversations shift from emotional reactions and personal stories to critical analyses of the events and ensuing military, political, and financial reactions worldwide. "Students are facing a natural tension between moving on with their studies and returning to normalcy and feeling slightly guilty about doing that since there has been very little closure about what this all means to them, the United States, and the world," says Wells, dean of student affairs.

On October 8, a day after the United States and Great Britain began bombing Afghanistan, the University held a memorial service in honor of the alumni who are dead or presumed dead, and the students, faculty, and staff members who lost close relatives in the September 11 attacks. Families of those killed or missing filed into the front rows in Hendricks Chapel to hear words of comfort and songs of remembrance. Midway through the service, two students lit white candles as the names of the deceased alumni and the SU community members who had lost close relatives were read aloud. SA president Ben Riemer '02 told the assembly that although Americans are moving on with their lives, they won't forget September 11, 2001. "We'll remember the people who lost their lives and lost their loves," Riemer said. "It is this remembrance that will drive us forward."

"My generation is leaving college now with a very different mission," Riemer said. "There's a long and uncertain road ahead. And as this country has done in the past, we shall overcome, but we will never, ever forget."

Remembrance Scholars Honor Lives Lost to Terrorism

Each year Syracuse University awards Remembrance Scholarships to 35 seniors in honor of the 35 SU students killed in the terrorist bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988. Among other duties, the Remembrance Scholars organize the annual Remembrance Week, which this year was held the week of October 21.

"The events of September 11 changed Remembrance Week in ways that are difficult to describe," says Lisa Mueller '02, one of this year's Remembrance Scholars. "We all felt a greater personal connection to the honor of being Remembrance Scholars because our perceptions of loss were greatly heightened. Our empathy with those who lost loved ones in the Pan Am disaster has become even more intense."

Among Remembrance Week activities were a convocation at Hendricks Chapel; a rose-laying ceremony at the Wall of Remembrance; the showing of videotapes concerning the tragedy; a front-window display at the Schine Student Center; and Make a Difference Day, during which students performed community service at various locations in the Syracuse area to honor the dead.

"We felt a responsibility to not only honor and remember those who died on Pan Am 103, but to honor and remember all those who have lost their lives to terrorism," Mueller says. "All of our activities were centered on themes of honor, remembrance, tolerance, and love."

—David Marc

