

Tempe's 'Healing Field' readied for 9/11 observance

by Colton Shone/KTAR (September 9th, 2011 @ 11:40am)

TEMPE, Ariz. -- Two days before the 10th anniversary of 9/11, volunteers placed thousands of American flags at Tempe's "Healing Field."

Each flag honors one of the people killed when terrorists flew jetliners into buildings in New York City and Washington, D.C., and a fourth hijacked plane crashed into a Pennsylvania field.



One volunteer, Ellie Lobel, said the "Healing Field" is personal -- she was supposed to be on the 97th of the first tower hit at the World Trade Center.

She was 10 minutes late for work that morning.

"My niece, named Angel by the way, forgot to take out the garbage cans -- her only chore -- the night before," Lobel said. "So the next morning, I ran to take the kids to school and drop them off and something was just telling me, 'No, just stop six blocks, back by the house. not a big deal.' But, I knew I was going to be late for the first time."

Six of Lobel's friends died that day. She said the Healing Field at Tempe Town Lake does help the healing process.

"The reaction is like, wow, you were meant to be here. For whatever reason, for whatever you're doing in your life, you were meant to be here. And my daughters were young, my daughters were 8 and 10, and I got to raise them, I got to watch them grow up. They're now both in college."

Each of the nearly 3,000 flags in the Healing Field has a card with the victim's name and a short biography. Yellow ribbons designate first responders; blue flags the flight crews on the hijacked planes; teddy bears child victims.

At 5:46 a.m. Sunday -- the time the first plane struck the World Trade Center -- a brief ceremony will be held at the Healing Field. Later that day, each of the victim's names will be read. A candlelight vigil will be held at 7 p.m.