

Never Say 'I Should Have...'

This year the entire country commemorated the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center. Local businesswoman Cyndi Hunoff says she remembers the day as if it was yesterday.

"The morning that it happened, I was sitting reading the paper and my daughter came out and said one of the buildings had been hit," she said.

So like many Americans, they turned on the TV in time to see the second plane hit.

"I was so intrigued... could you imagine what that would be like," she said. "I can't imagine the panic."

Cyndi says she went to work and couldn't wait to get home because she didn't have a TV in her downtown Yankton store.

In the days and weeks that followed many wondered what they could do to help the families that were directly affected by the acts of terrorism.

Cyndi wanted to give back and help.

By the close of 2001, Cyndi was preparing to take her daughter Stacie to Washington, D.C., to work as a senate page. The thought of going to New York City intrigued her even more, but she didn't want to go as a tourist.

"I had a friend that worked at the Pentagon with the Marine Corps, so I called and asked him and he had no idea. So I called the Chamber of Commerce in New York City and asked them 'Who's in charge of the volunteers?'"

First they directed her to the Red Cross, but because she didn't have any medical training. Cyndi was told to contact the Salvation Army. She filled out mountains of paperwork in order to volunteer.

In January 2002, with everything squared away and arrangements made it was time to head east. After dropping her daughter in D.C., Cyndi and her youngest daughter, Abbie, headed to New York.

Cyndi, a self-described "midwestern country girl," had a tough time navigating through the streets of New York City, especially in pickup truck a friend of her's had rented for her.

Streets were blocked off the closer you got to the site. The national headquarters for the Salvation Army had told Cyndi to just show her badge and the authorities would let her through. Seems simple enough, but every turn they made they were met with roadblocks and cops telling them to turn around or go the other way, she said.

Eventually Cyndi and Abbie made their way to the hotel — thanks to a very understanding officer.



Hard Hat Cafe where Cyndi worked in January 2002.

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