



President Eric W. Kaler
The University of Minnesota Twin Cities
202 Morrill Hall
100 Church St. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear President Kaler:

It has come to our attention that the Minnesota Student Association, of the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, recently rejected a resolution calling for the remembrance of 9/11 to become an annual event. The crux of this refusal stems from a concern that this yearly recognition might incite feelings of bias and racism among the student population, with an ensuing increase in tension on campus.

As a 9/11 organization--the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation, established in honor of a firefighter killed on 9/11, we are deeply disturbed by this development.

The rejection of that resolution engenders a real question: Is the legacy of 9/11 retribution, hatred, and fear? Because the people who were actually there live a different legacy.

Like many of the other victims' families, Stephen Siller's family was not mired in some dismal abyss where they were never able to move past feelings of anger and retaliation. Instead, Stephen's six brothers and sisters took the darkest moment of their lives and brought forth kindness, support and caring. They immediately began Tunnel to Towers with the expressed mission--taken from the teachings of St. Francis Assisi--of "Let Us do Good." In fact, New York Senator Chuck Schumer has applauded Tunnel to Towers as an organization that "Rather than curse the darkness, lit a candle which has now become a bonfire, a bonfire because of (Tunnel to Towers)."

To date, Tunnel to Towers has raised millions of dollars that have funded the building of high-tech "smart homes" for service members catastrophically injured in war, including one for triple-amputee, Marine Cpl. Mark Litynski, who moved into his customized home in Duluth, MN this past July.

And that is precisely why our foundation would like to bring our "9/11 Never Forget Mobile Exhibit," at no cost, to the campus of University of Minnesota Twin Cities. The dates we are proposing are December 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.

Tours of the 1000 square-foot exhibit, which contain artifacts from the World Trade Center, are lead by FDNY battalion chiefs and firefighters who were on duty that day, and can offer those who tour the exhibit the perspective of eyewitnesses. The remarks they share with visitors to the exhibit are hero-centric--celebrating the courage of Stephen Siller, and the hundreds of other first responders who perished that day.

That is the same sensibility your own university shares through its Thomas E. Burnett Jr. Scholarship in recognition of the courageous actions of your University of Minnesota alumnus on 9/11.

Two things to note:

*Our "9/11 Never Forget Mobile Exhibit" was in Waseka MN for several days this past summer, and not only did its presence fail to create a negative reaction of any kind, it drew record crowds, and donations, for the exhibit--which charges no entry fee.

*Our "9/11 Never Forget Mobile Exhibit" also enjoyed a warm reception when it was on the campus of the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. It journeyed to the campus in the midst of a controversy about a particular History of 9/11 course being offered at the school.

We are certain that UNC Chancellor Carol Folt will confirm that the presence of the exhibit was instructive, enlightening and widely praised by all.

We welcome the opportunity to speak with you as soon as possible about bringing our "9/11 Never Forget Mobile Exhibit" to the University of Minnesota Twin Cities in early December.

Sincerely,

John Hodge
Chief of Operations
The Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation
(203) 648-2430