

Millstone businessman supports 9/11 workers Peter Grandich urges community to help sick, dying responders

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MILLSTONE - Around the holidays, it's not unusual for people to get the urge to give to a worthy cause.

When Millstone's Peter Grandich took a few moments this holiday season to reflect on all he has been blessed with, he, too, felt the desire to help others who are less fortunate.

During his search to find a cause he could dedicate himself to, Grandich came across a group of people who gave of themselves to help others only to face sickness and death as a result - the Sept. 11, 2001, World Trade Center first responders. Grandich learned of their plight from the Long Island-based FealGood Foundation, and immediately wanted to help.

"It's an American tragedy that has gripped my heart," Grandich said. "Of the 40,000 people who responded to Ground Zero after the attacks, 70 percent, or 33,000, are sick or dying as a result of their service."

He continued, "We are talking about thousands of EMTs [Emergency Medical Technicians], EMS [Emergency Medical Service] workers, police, fire, military, construction workers and volunteers from all over the country who now suffer from breathing and lung ailments, post-traumatic stress disorder, organ failure and other horrific physical and mental illnesses."

Grandich pointed out that many of these first responders can no longer work, cannot pay medical bills, and are at risk of losing everything at a time when their primary concern should be staying alive.

John Feal, founder of the FealGood Foundation, said, "These people risked their lives without prejudice. There is no money in the world that is going to save their lives, but we can give them a little compassion and respect. We give them a safety and support system and give them hope."

Feal is a 9/11 first responder. He is one of the many injured at what he calls "The Pile." Feal has had to have his foot amputated and underwent months and months of therapy to recover from the ordeal. Like many 9/11 responders, he also suffers from breathing ailments as a result of his work at the site and can no longer work. Yet, in 2005, he started the FealGood Foundation to help those who are so much worse off than he is.

Although he may no longer be able to work a job, Feal has made it his daily duty to help other survivors and advocate on their behalf. He even donated a kidney to another first responder - a man he had never met - whose kidneys failed because of his 9/11 service.

"In 2001, on Sept. 11, everybody was patriotic and everybody wanted to help," Feal said. "You don't need a plane to hit a building to be compassionate."

Grandich, the founder of Trinity Financial, Sports and Entertainment Management in Wall Township, has committed to putting his efforts and resources behind Feal's group.

"As an American and a native New Yorker, I'm extremely upset that the true heroes of America's greatest single tragedy are being totally discarded and left to literally die," Grandich said. "And, despite this truly appalling occurrence, not one of them has been known to say if they had to do it all over again, they wouldn't. That's beyond any call of duty and deserving of every American's immediate attention and help."

Grandich has made a donation to the organization and has also spent the past several weeks recruiting friends and business associates to join him, including several bigname athletes who are on his company's advisory board.

"Trinity Financial has two separate divisions - one that assists the average American and one to serve the unique needs of professional athletes," he said. "So, we have been blessed to have many athletes associated with the firm, and each of those men is happy to help the FealGood Foundation in whatever ways they can."

Joe Klecko, a former New York Jet, fourtime member of the "New York Sack Exchange," and only defensive National Football League player to go to the Pro Bowl in three different positions, said that people usually look up to football players and call them heroes.

"We're not heroes," he said. "The real heroes are the men and women who spent months sifting through the rubble to find survivors and victims. The real heroes are the police and fire and military who put their lives on the line for our safety every day. We owe them a debt of gratitude and I am happy to lend my name to the effort."

Another member of Grandich's advisory board who has pledged to support FealGood is two-time Super Bowl winning New York Giant Lee Rouson.

"Helping others was a major focus from day one at Trinity Financial," said Rouson, who co-founded the company with Grandich.

He continued, "The Bible tells us in John 15:13-14 'Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.' The 9/11 responders have done so and are deserving of our government and its people to help them now for helping us in our time of need."

Grandich said he hopes stirring up support for Feal's nonprofit will convince more people to step forward for the 9/11 responders with donations of money, Christmas toys, pro bono services, and organ donations.

"They helped America without even questioning if it was in their best interest," Grandich said. "Now it's time for America to help them."

Those who would like to help the Feal- Good Foundation can send donations to FealGood Foundation, 144 Shenandoah Blvd., Nesconset, NY 11767.

To learn more about the organization, visit www.FealGoodFoundation.com.

For more information, contact Peter Grandich at (732) 642-3992 or e-mail him through his Web site at www.TrinityFSEM.com.



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