

DPW

Project dedicates trees to 9-11 victims; 20 planted at fire station in Sun Valley

BY AMI GRILLY, Special to the Daily News

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SUN VALLEY - Nearly five years after the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and civic leaders announced plans Thursday to plant a tree for each of the 343 New York City firefighters who died in the collapse of the Twin Towers.

The project is part of "United We Plant," a program launched in Los Angeles four years ago, with a tree designated for each of the 2,996 victims of 9-11. Among the last 500-or-so trees still to be planted will include those representing the fallen firefighters.

On Thursday, 20 trees were planted near Fire Station No. 77 in Sun Valley in a ceremony that included the burial of dove feathers and leaves collected from Ground Zero.

"September 11th brought positive emotions: compassion, love, and kindness for one another," said Sharyn Romano, president of the Hollywood/Los Angeles Beautification Team, which is spearheading the effort.

"After that we all walked a little differently, we all felt a little differently. Each tree planted allows us to go back to those emotions."

Villaraigosa also announced the creation of "Million Trees LA," an interactive Web site administered by the Department of Public Works, that will allow residents to plant a tree to acknowledge a relative or friend while helping to beautify the city.

The program, Villaraigosa said, represents communities coming together and "planting for the past, while planting for the future."

The Web site, www.milliontreesla.org, includes a live "current tree count," with the goal of planting 1 million.