

Adil Ameer, member of Masjid Al Noor, Wappingers Falls, shared this speech for the closing reflection of our Sept. 14th DCIC Board Meeting. He prefaced it by saying that at the time of the attacks on the World Trade Center, he was living in Grand Rapids, Michigan, an area he described as “lily white.” He, being a brown-skinned man from Pakistan, was conspicuously different. Nonetheless, in the days after the attacks, he was treated only with kindness as people around him asked, “Are you okay? Is your family alright.”

IN HONOR OF OUR NATION

[Editor’s Note: The following speech was given by Adil Ameer, Regional Hospital President/CEO during the September 14 (2001) memorial service in honor of those killed in the recent East Coast terrorist attacks. The memorial service took place in the Regional Hospital’s Main Lobby.]

Good afternoon. Thank you all very much for being here. Of the many events and meetings that our hospital sponsors and hosts, this is probably one of the most difficult and emotional events ever held at the Regional Hospital.

We gather today as members of our community, in honor of our nation, in deep respect for our freedoms, and in remembrance of those who were lost in the recent attacks on our country and their families.

We can never truly feel the pain and suffering of those innocent people that died or were wounded in this horrific tragedy. We can never truly comprehend the agony, misery, and grief of the thousands of family members who now have to piece together their shattered lives. We can never truly estimate the loss and damage suffered by this great country after this cowardly attack.

As they say, after a dark night comes a bright dawn, after a storm comes a calm, and after the rain comes a rainbow. America will emerge from this tragedy with its pride, honor and freedom intact, and with its people more united and resolute to defeat this tyranny, tragedy and terrorism.

I came to this country over 30 years ago when I was 18, in search of a brighter future and education, and to fulfill a dream like the millions of immigrants who have come to this country over the years.

As a kid growing up in Karachi, Pakistan, I used to walk by the American embassy and look up to the American flag flying high above the Embassy building, and I would tell my friends that one day I am going to go there. None of them believed it and neither did I. Fortunately, I was able to come to the United States and have the privilege and honor of living in this country and became a U.S. Citizen in 1982. Even today, everyday, as I walk into the hospital, I look up at the American flag fluttering proudly in front of the Hospital and I get this tremendous feeling of pride, admiration and awe for living in this great country and being a U.S. Citizen.

When the terrorists destroyed the World Trade Center, they believed that not only were they destroying American lives and American property, but they also believed that they were destroying the American spirit.

America’s sense of greatness comes not from its towering and majestic buildings, nor its impressive array of highways or its glittering and gleaming towns and cities. America’s sense of greatness comes from its sense of well-deserved pride, its strength of character, its purpose of freedom, and most importantly, the

spirit of its people – and no terrorists or tragedy can ever break America’s pride, character, freedom or its people.

America has faced far greater challenges than this recent tragedy and has always withstood these challenges and emerged stronger than before, and as such, even in the face of this adversity, God willing, it will emerge a stronger and better nation, and will continue to flourish, prosper and serve as the beacon for freedom, honor and dignity, not just for Americans, but for people all over the world.