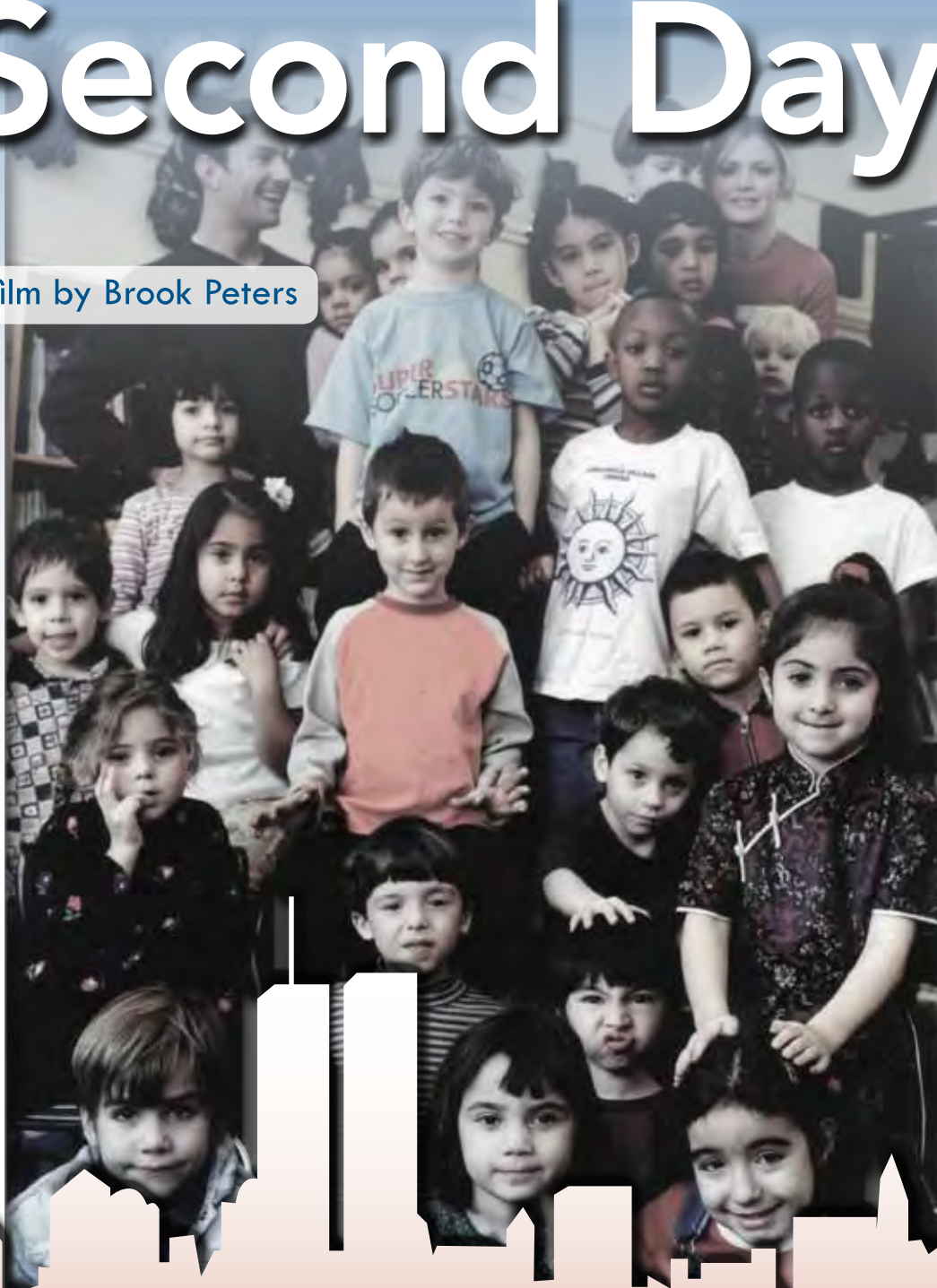


The

On September 11, 2001, Brook Peters was attending his second day of kindergarten blocks from the Twin Towers.

# Second Day

a film by Brook Peters



Community Discussion Guide



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*I wanted to make a film about what happened that day to so many.  
But focus on the students and teachers.  
To give them a voice that has not gone out there for the public to hear.*

*Hopefully this will be a learning experience for other kids and adults,  
to show you can live through something so tragic and  
come out of it with so much strength,  
a strength we all have within ourselves.*

Brook Peters, New York City, 2011

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## A Message From Brook Peters

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Thank you for watching my film, **The Second Day**. I hope that you and your family find it helpful and inspire you to tell your own stories and help other people.

A lot of people ask me why I made **The Second Day**. I started to think about it when I was 11 years old. In the fall of 2009 I was walking in my neighborhood with my mom, Michelle. As we talked, I told her I wanted to make a film. It

took me about two blocks to decide what it was going to be about, I told her, "I'm going to do it about 9/11, and us kids in the schools."

I realized that, although the story of 9/11 has been told many times, it has never been told from the point of view of the students who lived through it. So I began to interview kids I had known at P.S. 150, and some of my former teachers. People began to hear about my project and pretty soon, kids and families from other Downtown schools were contacting me, offering to talk.

For many years after 9/11, I bottled up my feelings about that day, about having to be evacuated from my kindergarten class just four blocks from the World Trade Center. More than 5,600 students were evacuated from downtown on September 11, 2001. My mom picked me up from school just as the second tower was hit, and she literally ran for our lives with me over her shoulder as a flood of smoke and glass came down the street like a tidal wave behind us.

As time went on, I shut out my feelings, assuming no one could really understand the confusion I felt. Making **The Second Day** has been healing, for me as well as others, not only to get stuff off my chest -- without having to really say anything -- but also helping other people.

I'm sure not everybody remembers the full day so vividly, but we all have our flashes and the things that truly stay with us for life. It's hard for people to think about that day, but if you don't remember it, you can't move on from it either.

The Second Day is my tribute to the other students and teachers that day and their heroism. I hope my film fills in the gaps for kids my age and younger, and shows them that people really do have the power and resilience within themselves to overcome anything.

### Brook Peters

*Brook, who lives in Lower Manhattan, worked on the movie for nearly three years, collecting 18 hours of interviews, which he then edited, with some help from family friends. He shot it using a simple Sony camcorder. Brook entered high school in September 2011.*



Photo credit: Molly Schacter,  
[MollysPhotography.com](http://MollysPhotography.com)



## The Second Day: Film Synopsis

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*A Film by Brook Peters*

*With Narration by Dan Lauria, Charles Durning and Michelle Peters*

For More information on the Film: [www.theseconddayfilm.com](http://www.theseconddayfilm.com)



On September 11, 2001, 4 year-old Brook Peters was attending his second day of kindergarten a few blocks from the World Trade Center in New York City when two planes struck the Twin Towers.

At age 11, Brook decided to make a film about that fateful day and its aftermath to give his fellow students and teachers at Ground Zero area schools a chance to share with the world their experiences.

Shot on a home video camera, *The Second Day* is his touching and inspirational documentary, completed when he was 14. The film provides a unique and hopeful perspective on 9/11 through the eyes of young people and educators who lived through it.

Brook's life, like that of so many others, was shaped by what he saw and felt on September 11. As his mother raced from Ground Zero with Brook on her shoulder, he watched as one of the Towers fell. That day Brook

lost a number of firefighter friends that he had grown up around.

In the film, students, teachers, counselors and firefighters think back on what they personally saw and felt on September 11, 2001, how they coped in the days that followed, and what they learned from the experience. Ten years later, they found there were a number of positive lessons to share: people possess an inner strength and resilience that can prevail over tragedies and hard times; in times of need people help and support each other in unexpected ways; and by connecting with others, we need not live our lives in fear and terror.



## Listening to Young Voices

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The authentic voices and narratives of children and teens are all too rare in today's world. Often adults want to avoid the inquisitive eyes and ears of the public and the press to protect young people. The events of September 11, 2001 have heightened the interest of journalists, researchers and historians even more; people want to know how children have coped with the events of that tragic day.

While young people have many occasions to talk with each other, their teachers and parents . . . they may not feel comfortable talking about their fears and painful emotions. Yet it is the act of talking and expressing feelings with those who have been through the same or similar experiences that can provide new opportunities for growth. Young people learn they are not alone.

Books, stories and film allow us to share the experiences of others. In **The Second Day** viewers are introduced to a young storyteller, 14 year-old Brook Peters. He takes us on a journey back to that day in 2001 and introduces us to students and teachers who were there. They have experienced one of the most devastating events in American history and it occurred in their own schoolyard. Their stories are an inspiration to all of us. They have not only coped but also grown from this experience. Their strengths are awe-inspiring, they have the ability to connect with each other, they seek support of adults in their lives, they are resourceful. . .all the while taking in the trauma of the day. These young people are resilient and that is the lesson we must learn FROM them.

It is important to remember that seeing this film and talking about the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> can stir up feelings that we thought were securely stowed away. Young people may find the film helps them continue a dialogue they've been having with their peers or parents. Parents and teachers have a new opportunity to see the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> through a very different lens, that of their son, daughter or student.



## Screening *The Second Day* and Questions for Conversation

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*Prior to screening **The Second Day**, it is recommended that you remind the audience to turn off their cell phones.*

Talking about the impact of a community disaster or catastrophic event offers an opportunity to discuss how young people respond and help each other, not just in the immediate aftermath but for the months and years of rebuilding that lie ahead. This film is unique in that the storyteller is a 14-year-old student in New York City.

***Here are sample questions and prompts to begin the conversation:***

What thoughts did you have as you watched the film and listened to the students tell their stories?

As you listened to the teachers in the film tell their stories?

As you think about the film, what stands out?

Give a reason why you identified that particular moment.

What is your overall feeling/mood after watching the film?

What did you learn from viewing this film that you did *not* know before?

What did you learn about resilience?

What did you learn about hope?

What did you learn about community?

Which students (or teacher) would you want to talk to?

Explore how schools have created new safety procedures and policies to keep students, schools and communities safe in the event of a disaster.

Encourage adults to talk about the film and discuss it with their children.

How will this help others learn about loss and community disaster and support?

Remember that films that have an 'afterlife' often make us think more deeply about the characters and our own lives.



## The People in the Film

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**Brook Peters**, was four years old and starting kindergarten in the fall of 2001 at P.S. 150 in Lower Manhattan. September 11, 2001 was his second day of school.

**Michelle Peters** – Brook’s mother, a volunteer fundraiser for the FDNY.

**Peter Napolitano** – Brook’s Kindergarten Teacher at P.S. 150 during the 9/11 year (2001).

**Captain Anthony Varriale** – Was assigned to Engine Co. 24, Fire Department City of New York (FDNY) from 1994 to 2004.

**Maggie Siena** – A Staff Developer at P.S. 234 in 2001. She is now Principal of P.S. 150, Tribeca Learning Center.

**Michael Iwachiw** – A Science Teacher at P.S. 150 in 2001. He is now an Enrichment teacher at P.S. 150 and head of the afterschool program there.

**Theo** – A Pre-K student at P.S. 150 in 2001

**Garvin Ming** – A Freshman at Stuyvesant High School in 2001.

**Philip Long** – A Freshman at Stuyvesant High School in 2001.

**Gloriela** and her mother, **Lizzette Colon** –Gloriela was in kindergarten at P.S. 150 in 2001.

**Daniel** – A first Grade Student at P.S. 234 in 2001

**Jamie** – A second Grade Student at P.S. 150 in 2001.

**Linda Lantieri** – Director of the Inner Resilience Program, New York

**Ada Rosario Dolch** – Principal of the High School for Leadership and Public Service in 2001

**Felipe Hernandez** – A counselor at the NYU Child Study Center in New York in 2001.

**Cora** – A Kindergarten Student at P.S. 89 in 2001.

**Zack** – A first Grade Student at P.S. 150 in 2001.

**Christine Walford** – The School Secretary at P.S. 150 in 2001.

**Emma** – A fourth Grade Student at P.S. 234 in 2001.





## The Campaign: Show Your Strength

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When Brook set out to tell his story about 9/11, he didn't realize he would be telling a story of inner strength and resilience. Through the experience of interviewing his fellow students in Downtown Manhattan, and talking about The Second Day with the international press, Brook realized that his message of inner strength is a universal message, and that people around the world experience daily challenges that require courage and resilience.

The result is the Show Your Strength Campaign; we invite you to pay it forward, inspire someone with your story, and share how you face life's challenges.

Go to the website and learn more: <http://theseconddayfilm.com/campaign/>

Watch the film and then have young people share what they have done in the face of adversity.

Why take **Action**? Action is a **protective** factor in our lives!

- Action is highly correlated with resilience and an antidote for traumatic experiences.
- Action is an element of self-care and correlated with positive youth development.

**Submissions by September 30, 2011 will be considered for the Show Your Strength music video!**

Log on to the website <http://theseconddayfilm.com/campaign/>

- Submit a photo and become part of the Show Your Strength Music Video!  
The Award-winning Canadian rock band [Simple Plan](#) is supporting the *Show Your Strength* Campaign and hopes to inspire youth across the globe to share universal stories about inner strength in the face of adversity or difficult times.

Brook approached Simple Plan to use their song, [What If](#), as the soundtrack to the *Show Your Strength* video because, "I feel it makes listeners question what they can do to change themselves and, in turn, help to change the world."

What if I lead the way?  
What if I make mistakes, will you be there?  
What if I change the world?  
What if I take the blame, will you be there?

Important: Although there is a deadline for inclusion in the Music Video, the Show Your Strength campaign is ongoing, and submissions will continue to be welcomed and posted online!



## Community Discussion Guide Credits

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### **Author**

Dr. Donna A. Gaffney  
Co-Founder, The 4 Action Initiative Curriculum  
Learning from the Challenges of Our Times:  
Global Security, Terrorism and 9/11 in the Classroom  
<https://sites.google.com/site/the4actioninitiative/>

### **and**

Advisor for Education and Research  
Project Rebirth  
New York, New York 10038  
[www.projectrebirth.org](http://www.projectrebirth.org)

### **Contributors**

Michelle Peters  
Brook Peters  
Elana Sundland

For additional information about this guide,  
contact Dr. Donna A. Gaffney, FAAN,  
[donna.gaffney@projectrebirth.org](mailto:donna.gaffney@projectrebirth.org)



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P.O. Box 411367  
San Francisco, CA 94141  
800-475-2638

[www.videoproject.com](http://www.videoproject.com)

