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COLUMN FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 22, 2002

Local Student Uses Art Form to Express Feelings Following Sept. 11

Uses artwork to raise funds for NYC Fire Department

By Rep. Paul Semmel (R-187)

With the Memorial Day holiday upon us and Flag Day fast approaching, I wanted to tell area residents about a young man from Germansville in Lehigh County who came up with a very imaginative and patriotic way to express his reactions and emotions following Sept. 11.

One day not too long after that fateful day, 11-year-old Ryan Fiedler asked his mother – who owns *Windsocks by Connie: Artistry in the Wind* – for a piece of windsock material. He then designed a patriotically themed windsock in an effort to release the emotions that had been building up since Sept. 11.

The end result was a design that includes white stars on a background of blue, intertwined and encircled by a white stripe from which red and white streamers hang. Also on the blue background are red stripes, a half-star and a plane.

Ryan describes his artwork in his own words: “I went to work and made some stars, next using white to encircle us into one. The red lines were for each family. The halfstar is for all the unfinished business the nation will have to work on. The plane represents the strength and courage of our military.”

When mom Connie saw what her son had designed, the two of them decided to incorporate the idea into a special “Unity Windsock” that is now included in her repertoire of other custom-designed, hand-made windsocks she sells through her Internet business.

Ryan wanted to not only show his patriotism through the design of the windsock, he also wanted to find a way to raise funds to help the New York City Fire Department purchase new fire trucks.

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So mother and son are selling the windsocks and giving a portion of the proceeds to the department. Ryan has attached a message to every windsock being sold explaining the symbolic meaning of his design.

He and his mom very graciously presented me with a windsock that I intend to fly during the Memorial Day holiday and on both Flag Day and Independence Day.

Following Ryan's request, I also presented Gov. Mark Schweiker with a Unity Windsock, which the governor assured me would fly proudly in memory of all those lost on Sept. 11.

In a letter of thanks sent to Ryan, the governor said the attacks on New York, Washington and Somerset County were attacks on all Americans everywhere.

He told Ryan that during the past months, Pennsylvanians have been dealing with a range of emotions at the loss of so many innocent lives – including grief, anger and rage.

“We look to our hearts for the right answer – the right expression of love, sorrow and support,” he said.

“In the wake of the tragic events of Sept. 11, Americans gained a new recognition and appreciation of our true heroes. They are the humble heroes of our police and fire departments, our medical emergency personnel who risk their lives every day to protect and save our citizens.

“Actions, such as yours in designing this windsock, reveal an important and profound aspect about America: that the one target the terrorists missed is America herself,” the governor told Ryan.

Gov. Schweiker is absolutely correct. The strength of our nation lies not in concrete and steel, but rather in the hearts and souls of every American – as has been witnessed time and again in the thousands of personal gifts and donations made to help victims' families and to assist in the recovery operations.

For more information about Ryan Fiedler's Unity Windsock, visit
www.windsockbyconnie.com. # # #

JTS/jab

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House of Representatives

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

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DESIGNATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND
VETERANS AFFAIRS
STATE ARMORY BOARD
PENNSYLVANIA EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT AGENCY

April 9, 2002

The Honorable Mark S. Schweiker
Governor of Pennsylvania
Room 225, Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Schweiker:

It is my privilege and honor to present to you this hand made, "Unity Windsock". My constituent, Ryan Fiedler, 6515 Germans Corners Road, Germansville, PA 18053, age 11, took it upon himself to design and make this Unity Windsock after the tragedy of September 11, 2001. Ryan is selling his windsocks and a portion of the proceeds will go to the New York Fire Department to help purchase new trucks. Ryan has attached a message to every windsock being sold to explain the symbolic meaning of his design.

I too have been honored with a "Unity Windsock", and proudly display it in my district office for everyone to see.

Should you require my assistance with this related matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul W. Semmel".

PAUL W. SEMMEL
Representative, 187th District

PWS/kam

Enclosure

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MANAGEMENT AGENCY

April 10, 2002

copy

Ryan Fiedler
6515 Germans Corners Road
Germansville, PA 18053

Dear Mr. Fiedler:

I would like to send a belated thank you for the windsock that you designed expressing your thoughts in regards to the tragic events of September 11th, 2001.

I have forwarded the windsock, along with your personalized card to the Governor, Mark Schweiker.

If I may be of any assistance to you in the future, please do not hesitate to contact me. Once again, thank you.

Best regards,

PAUL W. SEMMEL
State Representative
187th Legislative District

PWS/bmg