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BRAVEST BROTHERS

Family praying for life of youngest

By PHILIP MESSING

Firefighter Gregory Saucedo may be the baby of the family, but his three brothers have always known he was the strongest of them all.

But brothers Paul, Christopher and Stephen realize strength alone can't bring him back from the rubble of the World Trade Center, where he went missing Tuesday.

Gregory, 32, a 10-year FDNY veteran, was stationed at Ladder Co. 5 at Houston Street and Sixth Avenue. He disappeared amid the rubble of the north tower while seeking to save strangers with his boss, Lt. Vincent Giammona.

"They were two physically fit firefighters," Stephen Saucedo, 33, said at the family home in Mill Basin, Brooklyn.

Stephen is a probationary firefighter who spent 12 agonizing and fruitless hours looking for his brother at the disaster scene.





DAYS OF ANGUISH: Brothers Stephen, Christopher and Paul Saucedo await news of their youngest brother, firefighter Gregory (right), last seen heading up the stairs of the World Trade Center's north tower with his supervisor. Rick Dembow

"He spent an hour running up and down stairs saving hundreds of people," Stephen recounted, noting how other firefighters, those lucky enough to return, last saw Greg and his lieutenant passing them on the 37 floor in the north tower, "going higher up," before their disappearance.

The brothers plan a memorial Mass for their missing sibling on Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. at Mary Queen of Heaven Church on E. 57th St. and Avenue M.

But their mood isn't sad.

To hear the Saucedo brothers tell it, they can't remain sad for long, as they have memories of Gregory's madcap personality.

"Greg was a very, very social person, a gregarious personality," explained Christopher, 36, a professor of sculpture at the University of New Orleans. "He literally had four or five best friends."

"He was like a big, goofy kid," added Stephen.

Stephen, who's normally assigned to Ladder 13 in Manhattan, was working for Engine 284 in Dyker Heights, Brooklyn the day of the attack.

Grimy and tired, Stephen trudged miles in full uniform to his brother's firehouse, hoping against hope to see his brother alive.

"All I could hear was my mother saying, 'Watch out for your brother!'"

Late that fateful Tuesday night he was heartened when he saw his brother's blue pickup heading the wrong way on Sixth Avenue.

"I was so happy I ran into the street and said, 'Greg! Greg!' but it wasn't him. It was someone else from the firehouse driving," he recalled.

Girl, 7, repays city that gave her life



PAYBACK: Lorena Urbaez is taking home just one of her dozens of toys — the rest she's given to children of WTC terror victims. N.Y. Post: Nathan Edwards

By TODD VENEZIA

Little Lorena Urbaez had heart problems that almost killed her last summer — but now she's proved she has one of the biggest hearts in the world.

The 7-year-old daughter of a poor Dominican farmer — who underwent a life-saving operation in August — is donating scores of toys she got from caring New Yorkers to the children of Port Authority workers lost in the Sept. 11 World Trade Center attack.

"I'm so sad for all the other families that have lost their parents," the youngster said through a translator. "I want to share my toys."

Lorena suffered from a congenital heart defect that, without surgery, would have lead to her death before she turned 20. In her impoverished village, however, there was little hope of such medical help.

That was until the Rev. Brian Jordan, a Catholic priest at St. Francis of Assisi Church on West 31st Street, convinced state officials to pave the way for the penniless girl to come to New York and get the life-saving operation.

When reports of her journey came out in August, generous New Yorkers showered her with toys. Her room at New York Presbyterian Hospital was soon filled with more than 60 stuffed animals, porcelain dolls and plastic action figures.

Her Aug. 16 operation was a success and Lorena was scheduled to fly home Sept. 11 courtesy of American Airlines.

But those plans changed as she watched in horror on her hospital room TV as hijacked American and United airlines jets slammed into the Twin Towers, killing thousands.

"She said she wanted to do something for New York since New York had done so much for her," Jordan said. "She came up with the idea to give back her toys. I was amazed that someone so young could be so generous."

Lorena looked nervous yesterday as she held a tiny American flag and tearfully hugged her mother, Cecelia Batista Perez, at a press conference yesterday with New York Health Commissioner Antonia C. Novello.

She soon grew more comfortable and handed two of the toys — a stuffed panda and a plush emperor penguin — to Sgt. Joseph Poland and Officer Pedro Batista of the Port Authority Police force, which had 35 officers missing and two confirmed dead yesterday.

Lorena, whose mother gave relief efforts $300 that Americans had donated to her, wanted to give the toys to the families of Port Authority workers and police because of the kindness they showed her as she arrived at JFK.

"We are proud of a young child who is thinking about all that we are going through," Batista said. "And I'm proud to be Dominican, just like her."

Lorena heads home today. She will bring one toy — a stuffed Pokemon Pikachu doll that doubles as a backpack. She calls it "el conejo," the rabbit.

"She said 'When I came here I was poor,'" Father Jordan said. "Now I'm going back rich."

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