

# Artist Draws on Spirit Of Unity at 9/11 Event

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POINCIANA | There are a lot of ways to express grief.

One of the surest healing methods, Bobbi Mastrangelo believes, is when people come together, and feel that surging sense of unity and the exhilaration that a true test of character brings -- particularly when it's done in a group.

"Americans are strong people, and they're innovative and creative," Mastrangelo said. "They're just so amazing and dedicated. We're not an oppressed nation at all."

Mastrangelo is an artist who lives at the Solivita development in Poinciana, where she's a part of the Solivita Artisan Guild -- and has had a special interest in artwork dedicated to a devastating moment in American history: the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C.

Mastrangelo has curated art, photos, poetry, songs and videos that pay homage to those who lost their lives on 9/11, including fire fighters, police officers, rescue workers, Ground Zero work crews and the military.

She started this project right around the time Independence Day was coming up, when she decided to create a sculpture called "Don't Go Soft on Terrorism," a collage on all the 9/11 happenings, taken from Life magazine.

Mastrangelo is perhaps best known for her work replicating water covers and access hole covers in streetscapes.

She decided to work on "Don't Go Soft on Terrorism" and other homages, she said, because she loves patriotic works of art.

What's surprising, she said, is how much has changed in the past decade since those devastating attacks.

That was reflected, Mastrangelo said, when Solivita held a memorial breakfast on the morning of Sunday, Sept. 11, to pay tribute to those lost in the deadliest terrorist attacks in this nation's history.

"It was a beautiful tribute and the veterans were all there and gave their tribute," she said. "They put my sculpture 'Don't Go Soft on Terrorism' at the entryway along with the flags they had, two

flags crossed over a clear glass container of pebbles, and people could take a pebble as a remembrance. They had two big posters with 9/11 in the center, and people could put their comments right around it and be framed."

More importantly, she said, neighbors turned out, and that sense of unity was everywhere among the 160 people in the Solivita ballroom on the 10th anniversary of the attacks.

"When it's your country, you want to be a part of the healing -- and I think people are healing, too," she said. "It brought a lot of tears to people's eyes."

Mastrangelo uses her web site -- [www.bobbimastrangelo.com](http://www.bobbimastrangelo.com) -- and Facebook page -- [www.facebook.com/bobbi.mastrangelo](http://www.facebook.com/bobbi.mastrangelo) -- to present her artwork to a wider audience. She also has a blog she writes about her artistic and emotional reaction to the attacks.