



Loren and Matt Sellitto join son Jonathan, right, in the kitchen at their New Vernon home.

each forum, they give me a checklist to follow up. It's a lot of work," said Loren. "I'm fortunate I'm in a position to help. There are many other families that have young children or work full time that just can't."

The Sellittos believe that part of the reason they've become so visible is they are accustomed to being in the spotlight after years in the teaching profession. They've been interviewed numerous times by local, regional and national publications and made television appearances with Connie Chung and Wolf Blitzer.

"There are others who do more than we do, but don't get the public recognition for whatever reason," said Matt. "It's as though if one interview goes well, then another reporter calls you and it goes from there. Sometimes it's uncomfortable, but we believe it's important to get information out to the public about post-9/11 activities."

Their goal, they said, is to educate people without making them afraid, so the public can live productively but still be aware.

"When I'm reunited with Matthew, I want to tell him that I did everything I could to bring justice against the people who did this terrible thing," said

Matt, with emotion. "I might not be successful, but at least I can tell him I tried my best."

"Some people ask how we can do it, but it's a matter of survival for us," said Loren. "What choice do we really have? We love our boys and have faith in God. We were a family like any other, but we've had to learn how to be a new one."

Jonathan, Matthew's younger brother, felt the need to distance himself from New York in order to deal with his grief. He was starting his freshman year at Siena College in Albany when his brother died, but then chose to transfer to the College of Charleston in South Carolina to "get back on track and try to live a normal life."

Matt jokes that one of the mistakes he made after losing Matthew was telling Jonathan to live his life to the fullest. "That is the wrong thing to say to a 19-year-old," Matt said.

Jonathan, now 23, went to Italy last summer as part of a student exchange program. There he discovered his love of cooking. He is currently a sociology major at college and had originally thought of pursuing law, but now wants to go to Italy for another year next summer to learn more about Italian cooking.

ABOUT MATTHEW

Since his junior year at the University of Vermont, Matthew Sellitto had known he wanted the fast-paced life of Wall Street after graduation. For several years, he had been enamored by the tales of financial dealings while caddying at Somerset Hills Country Club in Bernardsville.

After graduating in December 2000 with a degree in economics, Matthew returned to New Vernon and March 1 started as a junior broker with Cantor Fitzgerald at the World Trade Center in New York City. He initially chose to live at home so he could focus on learning the business rather than be distracted by the lifestyle many of his friends were enjoying while living in their own apartments in the city.

With his high energy and determination, Matthew received a major promotion Sept. 1, 2001 and his first client base Sept. 10 that year, only six months after starting with Cantor Fitzgerald.

The fateful next day, Sept. 11, his father, Matt, who had retired the month before from Millburn High School, drove him to his regular 5:05 a.m. New York-bound train because his car was being serviced. There, they said their goodbyes.

A few hours later, Matt picked up the phone after hearing his son leaving a desperate message on the answering machine. When Matt told him to hang up and get out of the 105th floor of the burning One World Trade Center, his son told him that he couldn't get out of the building – a plane had crashed into floors below – and was calling to say goodbye. Matthew asked his frantic father to tell everyone that he loved them and hung up.

"As the younger brother, I always followed the path Matthew paved for me," he said. "My role in the family is different now. I'm thinking of going to Italy for a year after finishing school and returning to South Carolina to open a restaurant."

Jonathan is an accomplished cook, according to his mother.

As life inevitably moves on,

Matthew will be remembered not only by his family, but by those students who receive financial aid from the foundation that continues to grow in his name.

In addition to their public efforts, the Sellittos are creating a garden in the front of their home that eventually will be a private place for them to "have a part of Matthew."

Volunteerism Runs Deep

"We've always believed that if you're able, it's important to give back and to live by providing an example for our children," said Loren Sellitto.

For years, Loren was a member of the local first aid squad and also served as its president.

Husband Matt was honored by the National Football Foundation (NFF) with the East Region Chapter Leadership Award in 2004 at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City. A long-time member of the NFF Essex County Chapter, he started the Morris County chapter in 1995 and was president. The chapter has recognized hundreds of the area's best scholar-athletes.

The cornerstone of the Morris County NFF's scholarship fund-raising activities is an annual Sports Nut Night, which every year attracts more than 200 attendees, who come to listen to some of New Jersey's well-known sports figures and participate in a sports trivia contest. Initially the Matthew C. Sellitto Scholarship Fund was run through the Morris County NFF, but when it grew too large, the Sellittos established it as a separate entity.

Matt was a member of the Millburn High School football coaching staff from 1971 to 1977, offensive coordinator for Seton Hall University from 1978 to 1980, and coached Little League baseball for seven years.

He is past president of the Harding Township Civic Association, past vice president of the Harding Township Educational Foundation and a previous member of the Harding Public Land Advisory Committee and Harding Township Recreation Association. Matt remains a member of the Harding Township Juvenile Conference Committee.