

A YEAR LATER: ATLANTA REMEMBERS: IMMIGRANTS: New citizens show their U.S. spirit

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Body

The first anniversary of the deadliest attack on the U.S. mainland gave immigrants in metro Atlanta a chance to show their love for a country that let them start anew.

They did not miss the opportunity.

In ways big and small, immigrants tried Wednesday to show native-born neighbors their love for the United States.

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A Vietnamese woman in Kennesaw painted U.S. flags on her toes. Motorists from Colombia and Mexico drove with their headlights on. Indian immigrants observed two minutes of silence.

"Believe it or not, we all feel part of the country," said Abraham Silva. "We've been affected, too."

He is helping his father, a native of Chile, organize a prayer meeting tonight for Spanish-speaking worshippers in Alpharetta.

In Lawrenceville, Fazi and Fariha Khan hosted several neighbors at a candlelight vigil at their home Wednesday.

They draped a large U.S. flag over a garage door --- the same flag Fazi Khan received when he became a U.S. citizen in 1985.

"We want to show Americans that we are as much Americans as they are," said Fazi Khan, a native of Pakistan.

A native of Iraq who lives in Gwinnett, Zahid Alhasnawi said the attacks depressed many immigrants in metro Atlanta, where one in 10 people was born abroad. "The way you cry about 9/11, we all cry about that," he said.

At least 500 people from 91 countries other than the United States were among the 2,819 people killed last Sept. 11, but immigrants grieved Wednesday for all who died.

"You feel for those people," Gustavo Lopez said.

He was among a group of Latino day laborers waiting for work in Cobb County.

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He had never heard of the World Trade Center before the attacks and still has a hard time understanding people who take so many innocent lives.

Questions about the attack and its aftermath were also the hot topic on Spanish-language radio stations that are better known for accordion-heavy Mexican music and goofy hosts. Newscaster Geraldo Guzman of WAZX-AM (1550) said some Hispanics **remember U.S.** support for repressive governments in Latin America.

"What is happening today is important to commemorate," he said. "But what is also sad is what the **United States** has been doing for many **years** to poor countries, developing countries, countries without power who do not share its doctrines."

A refugee from Sudan, William Dut, said the anniversary reminded him of a war in his native country that has killed 2 million people since 1983.

It pits an Islamic government in the north against southerners who practice Christianity and traditional religions.

Meanwhile, Sept. 11 acquired a **new** significance for at least 38 **immigrants** from 49 countries --- they became **U.S. citizens** at the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Director Rosemary Melville of the **Atlanta** INS encouraged them to look to the future. "The flag is still flying," she said.

---Reporters Shelia Poole and Yolanda Rodriguez contributed to this article.

Graphic

Photo: One of our **newest U.S. citizens**, Bethelhem Dagneu, born in Ethiopia, gets naturalization papers at an **Atlanta** INS ceremony. / JOHN AMIS / Special; Photo: Zahid Alhasnawi; Photo: William Dut

ME: Part of the special section, A **YEAR LATER**, which looks at the events commemorating the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, September 11, 2001.

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