

Canadian impressed by her country's response to attacks

From page 1.

Manhattan. I see police everywhere and posters of pictures of the missing people. But, the city is trying very hard to retain some sense of normality. Not getting back to normal is, somehow, letting the terrorists win. Still, it's difficult."

The morgue housing the remains of the victims is in the Chief Medical Examiner's office, Gornall's workplace. Body samples are taken from Ground Zero and from the morgue to the forensic science lab where Gornall and her colleagues carry out the DNA typing process.

As a criminologist, Gornall makes sure evidence linked to the crime is collected and sealed. Meanwhile, families of the victims are now responding to the chief medical examiner's request to provide hair brushes and toothbrushes, allowing Gornall and the others to gather DNA samples. The forensic scientists then try to match the DNA found in body samples to the DNA found in the personal items provided.

Once an identification is made, the heart-wrenching wondering, linked to the

unknown, ends: the family can put its loved one to rest. The beginning of the healing process starts at Gornall's

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desk.

As the world reaches out to the victims and to those involved in the cleanup, the medical examiner's office has not been forgotten. Earlier this week, school children from Brooklyn, delivered care packages to the firefighters, police officers and medical personnel at Ground Zero and to the chief coroner's office. Each package contains a box of raisins and a hand-written thank-you note from a child. Gornall was touched to find one of the packages on her desk.

Gornall and her husband Craig Pirie, an industrial designer, have lived in the

United States for four years. Gornall attended Highlands Public School and Aurora High School, before graduating from Queen's University in Kingston with a life sciences degree.

Determined to pursue a career in forensic science, Gornall then entered New Haven University in Connecticut. There, she studied under renowned forensic scientist Dr. Henry Lee who attracted much attention as a key witness for the defense in the O.J. Simpson's murder trial.

At NHU, Gornall earned a second science degree and went on to work in a private

DNA typing, a procedure used to find matching bone marrow transplant donors for people stricken with bone cancer. Joining the New York office of the chief medical examiner two years ago, she has dealt predominantly with criminal evidence gathered at murder scenes.

Gornall's education is far from over. She's working part time on a masters of science degree in meticulous biology at New York University.

But, for the time being, Gornall is focusing on the work at hand. "I'm a Canadian but on Sept. 11, I felt I was part of New York. This just didn't affect the

world. I was amazed to see the outpouring of caring from home, from Germany, England and Russia."

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