Child Orphaned at 4



Four-year-old Tylerann Zadroga lost her mother in 2004 and now her father is dead at age 34.

He was forced to quit working and collect a disability allowance late in 2004. The union representing the retired New York police detective claims his death was linked directly to the 16 hours a day he spent on rescue and recovery efforts at the Ground Zero site in the weeks following the terror attacks.

Michael Palladino, president of the Detectives' Endowment Association, says Zadroga was the first World Trade Center 9/11 emergency responder to die as a result of being exposed to dust and debris from the collapsing towers.

"Unfortunately I do not think he is going to be the last," said Palladino, who described Zadroga as a hero who disregarded his own health and safety while trying to save others.

He owed $50,000 in medical bills when he died. News reports have quoted a letter written by Zadroga in which he stated: "No ones cares at the job. They tell me I'm fine, go back to work. But truthfully, I haven't felt this bad in my life… And what thanks do I get now that I'm sick?"

Medical experts are worried that thousands of first responders, volunteers, rescue and recovery workers and others could end up with serious respiratory conditions as a result of inhaling toxins, dusts and other materials that were left floating in the air after the towers collapsed in the terror attacks.

The majority of those responding to the disaster and searching for victims afterwards were not using appropriate respiratory gear.