

**'WE WILL PREVAIL!
WE ARE THE HOKIES!'**

**By Betty Ewart, Editor
A JOURNEY TOGETHER
BP/USA National Newsletter**

Here are some thoughts for all the newly bereaved and all of us a little farther along on our grief journey. There is so much emotion these days – on TV, in the newspapers, on the street and in all our hearts. I am writing this between times watching the TV and through tears. We live not far from Virginia Tech and know a lot of graduates and fans of the school. From the minute of the first shooting, we have been watching and mourning with the families of the students and the faculty at Tech.

You at Tech are talking about us all! We see the pictures of your beautiful young men and women and of the faculty persons and we hear how they were always smiling, how they cared about others so much, what fun they were to be with and how they will never, ever be forgotten. We hear you parents say how you cannot believe what has happened; how you are so shocked and devastated you don't know what to do. We have all experienced that too!

We hear you parents, grandparents (yes, and even a great grandmother) and you siblings and friends saying you will remember forever the times with these loved ones and you will live the rest of their days for them and in honor of them. We hear you say, as we all have, that something good must come of all this pain and evil. We hear how a 76 year old survivor of the holocaust stood at the door of the class room and let his body take the bullets so his students could go out the window to safety. We hear of wounded young people holding doors shut to keep the shooter from coming in and killing their friends. We hear of another young person who stood in front of three others students and took the bullets to protect them. That is good in that it shows the basic goodness something like this can bring out.

We see balloon lift offs, bag pipers and candle light memorials – we still have those events and find comfort in them. We see grown men cry and remember that big boys do cry despite that old song some of us knew that said, "Big boys don't cry!" We see people of all ages, races, nationalities and religious faiths comforting one another and grieving together.

As we hear all of this, we ask, with you, "Why?" We remember when we didn't know how we would get through the day and then the next one and then the next. And then we hear the answers begin to come from you as they did from us. We may never know why in this life. We hear the words of the poet, Nikki Giovanni, a faculty member at Tech, said at the memorial service, "We will prevail; we will

prevail; we will prevail because we are the Hokies!” And we see a new great support group form before our eyes – the Hokie family! You cry together, you talk together, you mourn together, you uphold one another! You are one great big Bereaved Parents of the USA Chapter! Knowing that we are not alone and that we can help each other is the first step in healing.

We hear you cheer, “Let’s go Hokies!” and we are reminded of the plane in Pennsylvania and the young man saying, “Let’s roll.” - a start of healing and of life again. We see you start to pick up the pieces and decide that you will prevail and the gunman will not have the final word – you will and it will be a word of hope. Don’t let anyone tell you that you must “get over it.” You will get through it but never over it. When they ask you when you will be back to normal, tell them that you will never be back to the old normal that was before this happened but that you will find a new normal.

All of us in the Bereaved Parents of the USA are praying for you in the Hokie family and agree with the statement that now we are all Hokies. We stand ready to help in any way we can. We have materials on our web site to read and information about our annual Gathering being held in Chicago, July 13, 14 and 15, 2007. You can find these things by going to our web site at www.bereavedparentsusa.org.

You will prevail, as we have, but you will never forget and never lose the love you feel now for your husband, child, grandchild, brother, sister or friend.