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Utah schools show support for Virginia Tech

By Sheena McFarland
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Several schools in Utah are holding memorials for victims and students at Virginia Tech.

Brigham Young University is holding a candlelight vigil, the University of Utah's LDS Institute of Religion is making comfort quilts and Judge Memorial High School will wear Virginia Tech's colors and hold a prayer service.

BYU's vigil will be held from 8 to 9 p.m. Friday. Any members of the campus community who would like to show their support are invited.

A banner that people can sign with personal expressions will be available at the vigil and also all day Friday on the west end of the Terrace in the Wilkinson Student Center. The completed banner will be sent to Virginia Tech.

Those who wish to donate funds to lend assistance to victims and their families are asked to do so through the official Hokie Spirit Memorial Fund at Virginia Tech.

At the U.'s LDS Institute, students and community members will be sewing quilts from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday for the students affected by the shootings.

Columbine High School shooting survivor and Utah resident Gabby Harris said that in the aftermath of that April 20, 1999, attack, one of the most helpful things she received was a comfort quilt from someone on the other side of the country. She will be tying quilts at the institute Friday afternoon, along with others from the community who will volunteer their time.

"I know the kids from Virginia are facing some very dark days right now," Harris said. "The 'comfort quilts' are a tangible way for us to show those students our love, respect and concern for them, as well as helping them to feel safe. They are also a way for our community to offer hope and encouragement in their time of need."

This week, ZCMI Deseret Bookstore has been accepting quilting material donations from anyone wanting to help in the effort. Deseret Book has also agreed to handle the shipping costs of transporting finished quilts to Virginia. At this point, instead of donations, the ZCMI Deseret Book store will be accepting finished quilts so that they may be shipped to Virginia before the students go home for the end of the semester.

At Judge Memorial High School, students and faculty will forgo their traditional red and gold school uniforms to don Virginia Tech's colors of orange and maroon and hold a prayer service at 10 a.m. Friday, when an interfaith prayer service will take place on the campus of Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond.