

IT'S BACK TO SCHOOL TODAY FOR COLO. KIDS

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New York Post

May 3, 1999 | 4:00am

Traumatized Columbine HS students head back to class today, almost two weeks after their world was rocked by two classmates who massacred 13 people in a guns-and-bombs rampage at the school.

As the 1,900 teens who survived the Littleton, Colo., slaughter prepared to spend the rest of the school year with half-day classes at nearby Chatfield HS, thousands gathered at a final memorial service.

More than 3,000 people gathered at the Red Rocks amphitheater, about 15 miles west of Denver, where close friends of the 12 slain students and teacher Dave Sanders kept their memories alive.

"I will not allow this tragedy to erase the 27 years of excellence that Columbine represents," Columbine principal Frank DeAngelis said.

DeAngelis said most teens have said they want to go back to school and start putting the pieces together again.

"This is what our students are telling us: They want to be back with each other and their teachers," DeAngelis said, adding that grief counselors will be on hand.

Students have been out of school since the bloodbath on April 20 by Eric Harris, 18, and Dylan Klebold, 17 – who apparently took their own lives after shooting the others.

“People are in different places in their grief,” DeAngelis said. Some people are ready to move on, some are just starting and some aren’t ready to deal with anything right now.”

Freshman Jamie Thurmon said, “A lot of us are anxious to get back to routine ... [but] we feel like Columbine would be more like home, and help us heal a little better at a familiar place.”

In other developments:

*Six days before the shooting, gunman Harris was turned down by a girl he asked to be his date to the senior prom.

Columbine junior Brandi Tinklenberg spent the days after the killings wondering if she pushed Harris over the edge.

“I did wonder if I made him more upset about life,” she said. Tinklenberg wasn’t in school the day of the shootings.

*Harris created his own program of the shoot-’em-up computer video game “Doom” on his Web site that mirrored the massacre – there were two killers with lots of ammunition who targeted opponents who had no weapons.

“Basically, he took a competitive game and turned it into a massacre,” said Rabbi Abraham Cooper of the Los Angeles Simon Wiesenthal Center, which tracks Internet hate groups and has been analyzing Harris’ Web site.

*Rumors continue to swirl among students that Klebold’s and Harris’ deaths may have been a murder-suicide or a double execution, Time reports – though forensic evidence points to a suicide pact.