

# Crosses going back up

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The crosses are coming back to Clement Park.

The Illinois carpenter who erected, then removed, the handmade wooden crosses that came to symbolize the tragedy and controversy surrounding the Columbine High School shootings is returning Wednesday to restore the crosses in a different configuration.

Greg Zanis quietly put up the crosses atop a hill in Clement Park near the school last week. He received "quite a few" negative calls after he put up 15 crosses - one for each of the 13 victims and two for the killers. Callers objected to the crosses memorializing the young gunmen.

The father of one of the victims took down the two crosses for gun men Eric Harris and Dylan Kle bold on Friday, saying they didn't belong with the others. Zanis, upset by the controversy, drove back to the park from Illinois over the weekend and re moved the remaining 13 crosses.

"I don't blame the dad," Zanis said Monday night. "It took a lot of courage to do what he did."

Zanis plans to again erect 15 crosses. But this time, 13 will be on top of the same hill, with two in another part of the park. He plans to put yellow ribbon around them to discourage any vandalism.

"I've gotten 300-some phone calls asking me to come back," he said. "I'm planning to put the two up on another hill, but if one actual relative asks me not to put them up, then I won't."

Brian Rohrbaugh, the father who took down the two crosses, said Monday night that if Zanis puts up crosses for Harris and Klebold, he again will remove them. Rohrbaugh's son, Daniel, was one of the 13 killed at Columbine.

"Under no circumstances should you honor these murderers. If he puts them up, I'll take them down," Rohrbaugh said.

Rohrbaugh said he would like to talk to Zanis away from the media glare. He wants to know why the 15 crosses are necessary.

"My family name effectively ended with the murder of my son," he said. "The only ones who can forgive them are my son and God."

"(Zanis) has already done plenty of hurt to us," Rohrbaugh said. Zanis originally came to Colorado at the request of some parents of Columbine students.

Zanis began building crosses in 1997 after seeing his father-in-law and best friend gunned down in his hometown of Aurora, Ill. To date, his organization - Crosses for Losses - has erected 197 of the 80-pound crosses. He said he has not accepted payment for any of them.

"I'm just a carpenter. I thought it would be a fitting tribute," he said. "I'm willing to make crosses for anybody, anytime. It's just nice to be asked to do something like this."

A cleanup of the memorabilia at the park will begin this morning, with preservation of the thousands of items hoped to start next week, said Edie Hylton, community services manager for the Foothills Park and Recreation District.

The crosses may eventually become part of a permanent exhibit or traveling exhibits, she said.