

Minisink Valley Central School District

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April 17, 2007

Dear Minisink Valley Parents,

I write this letter to you today with a heavy heart. We received the sad news this morning that one of the students killed in the senseless shooting on the Virginia Tech campus yesterday is one of our graduates, Caitlin Hammaren, from the Class of 2005. Caitlin was a sophomore in the International Studies program at the university.

Anyone who attended one of our concerts would remember Caitlin. She was an outstanding musician and a member of the high school mixed chorus and the chamber choir. In fact, she was the president of the chorus her senior year. In addition, she played the violin in the All County Orchestra and was a member of our National Honor Society.

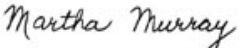
We informed our faculty, staff and students this morning and asked that the principals in all of our buildings tell our employees, many of whom knew Caitlin and her family. We've had counselors available to work with our high school faculty, staff and students throughout the day and will continue to have them available throughout the week as needed.

I spoke with Caitlin's father this morning to express condolences on behalf of the entire Minisink Valley community. Her parents are in Virginia now and will remain there to conduct services with Caitlin's college community friends. They will hold a memorial service here in Orange County at a later date. Caitlin's father told us that they want us to remember and celebrate the life of this outstanding young woman who touched so many of us.

Caitlin Hammaren was a beautiful human being, a role model for all young people. She assumed a leadership role in our high school making sure to influence others to be positive and involved in our school. She stood at the brink of the kind of greatness we all want for our young people. She wanted to go into International Politics, to influence in a positive way some of the insanity we see in today's world. If anyone could do it, Caitlin could.

We are always shocked and dismayed when a senseless tragedy like this occurs. To have it hit so close to home to one of our own is almost unbearable. Please remember Caitlin's parents and the families of all of these young people in your prayers. I know each of you will hold your children close tonight.

Sincerely,


Dr. Martha Murray
Superintendent of Schools