

Concert Chorus offers “Hope” to Flight 93 Families.



*Field of Honor
Shanksville, Pennsylvania*



On Sunday, September 11th the NBCS Concert Chorus provided the musical accompaniment at the 9/11 Memorial Services in Shanksville, PA. Their selections included, *Give Us Hope*, a stirring musical poem offering hope for the future and *Remember Me, Wherever You Go* a reflection on the passengers of Flight 93, their heroism and the families who will always remember them. Obviously touched by the words of the musical selections, the families also felt the sincerity and engagement by the Chorus. “I felt the pain of the families as we sat among them, but joy filled my spirits and heart when we started to sing and I saw those crying people start to smile, “ reflected Jayden Walker, 8th grader.

For NBCS it all started last May when the Department of the Interior contacted Donald Morris, the Director of Music at the school with an invitation to perform at the 15th Annual 9/11 Ceremonies in Pennsylvania. It would be a major commitment for the Chorus, in recess all summer with only 3 days to prepare. “But we had to do it! This would be a great experience for the boys and a tribute to the families. To round out the Chorus I invited this year’s graduates to join us,” stated Mr. Morris. Most of the preparation took place at the Frost Valley Camp, the annual opening of school experience and choir preparation for the upper class students. Then on Saturday, the Chorus left the school for the 5 hour ride to Pennsylvania and the hallowed grounds at Shanksville.

(The rest of the story will come from quotes made by the boys in their essays written after returning to Newark. To read each student’s essay click on the link at the end of the article)

Our trip to Pennsylvania was bittersweet for me. During the bus ride, I was able to bond with my choirmates a bit more, and strengthen friendships with my



classmates. However, when we arrived and the cameraman took us to the crash site, the joy faded. (ZG) At first, I only had a general feeling about the Flight 93 Memorial event; I was not around to experience the tragedy of 9/11 and, honestly, the only crashes we learned about were the twin towers. (NR) A cameraman explained to me what had happened and I could not believe what he was telling me. His words made me cry. (AS) The part that really got to me was listening to the phone calls, hearing the victims say good-by before they perished. (CJ) It was bittersweet hearing that, though they knew it meant they would die, they all agreed to crash the

plane in order to save other lives. It was such a selfless sacrifice, and it was a great honor for me to be part of celebrating their memory. (BD) Not all of them were policemen or firefighters; some of the biggest heroes were extraordinary people who found themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time on Flight 93. (CD).



For me, the day was a blur, for the most part, I was so focused on our performance and making a great impression for our choir and our school. The moment I snapped out of my daze, though, was when the bells rang and someone began saying the names of the Flight 93 victims. (CP) I felt like I should be saying some sort of thank you after each one was called. (CR) As I heard the bells ring, I felt the pain of the families who had lost their loved ones. I could sense the hurt, guilt, anger and sadness as each name was called and I felt those emotions with them. (GR) Being with the surviving family members of the fallen ones made me feel a sense of pride, proud that our nation had such heroes among its ordinary citizens. (AS) I could see that everyone was hurting. I could see them crying. But as we sang, I began to see some people smile, some even began to clap the beat of our song. It made me feel good inside that we could change their mood just a bit during a time of grief. It made me smile and filled me with a special energy to sing the best I ever have, beyond my best, to honor the people who gave their lives on Flight 93. (GM)



I hope we gave the families a bit of peace with our singing, but I know life for them has changed forever, and no amount of music will change it back. (SJ) I hope we did that when we sang, because it was an honor for me to be there with them. (NS) All I know is that we gave those grieving families a bit of hope just like their loved ones who perished on the plane gave to us all. (HH)

After returning the NBCS we received numerous e-mails and phone calls from people who attended the services. Only two have been included here as they typify the essence of these messages:

To the director and the entire chorus: Your performance today took my breath away. The musical selections were perfect, the singing was inspiring, I just cannot say how much I appreciated it. Thank you so much. I am certain you work very hard to perform at the level you do--believe me, it shows.

*Therese Boyd
Harrisburg, PA*

The Second message includes a link to a brief family video taken by the Guadagno family memorializing the ceremony.

Mr. Morris,

On behalf of the family of Flight 93 passenger Richard Guadagno, I would like to thank you and the Newark Boys Chorus for the beautiful music at the 15th anniversary ceremonies. Seeing these young men perform and listening to their angelic voices gives me hope for the future of our country. The musical selections made me smile through my tears on this very sad occasion.

Please know that our family is so very thankful that you all made the trip this year. And as I said to you and the boys that day, I am sure I will see them all on Broadway one day! I have attached a link which briefly shows their performance. I hope you can open it. (Click title to open) [Remembering Flight 93](#). That is me, my husband, cousin Lori and her partner Ross at the Wall.



To read the Students' 9/11 Memorial Essays:

[Click Here](#)