

News and stories

Fundraising Underway for Memorial Honoring Military Families

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Andrew Banas | [News10](#)

ALBANY, N.Y. (NEWS10) – Construction of a new memorial has already begun at Lafayette Park in Albany. It's not just to remember the veterans who died serving our country, but also the families they left behind.

There is no easy way to thank someone like Joan Mills or her son Roger.

As a member of the National Guard, he died while on a training mission in 2011.

"This is a concrete reminder that you need to be thankful that you have the life that you have," Joan Mills said.

She is just one example of the many family members that are left behind after their loved ones pay the ultimate sacrifice.

A new memorial in Lafayette Park hopes to honor them.

The goal is simple.

"That loss of one soldier sends a ripple through an entire family.

This monument will stand as a reminder to us that that loss is forever," Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan said.

John McKenna is one of the people spearheading the construction of the memorial.

It's a cause close to his heart.

"I lost my son in 2006. He was a state trooper and a marine captain," McKenna, the Chairman of the Gold Star Family Memorial Monument, said.

He says it's no coincidence that the monument is being built next to the veteran memorial in the park.

"People always probably had it in the back of their minds that we should be honoring the families. Now we brought it to light and I'm very happy. I think my son is smiling down on us and saying everybody is together again."

For now, only the base of the memorial is being built, that should be done in a few weeks.

McKenna says they still need donations to make sure the memorial someday stands.

People are encouraged to donate what they can.

The goal is to raise the funds they need by early spring.

In the meantime, Joan Mills and others like her will continue to lean on and support one another.

"We are all here for each other. It doesn't matter when or how or where your child was lost. But we're just so happy to be here for each other," Mills said.

Donations can be sent to the Gold Star Families Memorial Fund: