

# News and stories

## Gold Star memorial installed in Bay City

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BAY CITY, MI (WNEM) - A Mid-Michigan community is honoring soldiers who have given their lives.

A new monument is giving Gold Star families across Michigan a place to not only honor their lost loved ones, but also bond with others who have had a similar experience.

"What it really represents is a place people can go to and really bond together through that loss," said Lindsay Rotarius, board member of the Gold Star Project.

Rotarius is a Gold Star sister. Her brother, Airman 1st Class Matthew Graczyk, passed away in 2006.

"He joined the Air Force in 2004 and he was stationed in Ramstein, Germany air force base," Rotarius said.

When she was asked to be a Gold Star family representative she jumped at the chance to honor all families who have suffered that hardship.

"It's wonderful to be a part of it and it's something tangible so when you've lost someone, especially when they are overseas you

don't have the ability to have a place to necessarily go to," Rotarius said.

The Bay Veterans Foundation partnered with the Hershel Woody Williams Medal of Honor Foundation last year to construct the Gold Star Families Memorial Monument.

The monument is tucked between the brand new City Market and the county building in Bay City. It is the only one in Michigan.

Tim Eckstein, chairman of the Gold Star Project, said next month's monument dedication will have a very special guest.

Hershel Woody Williams is the last living recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor from Iwo Jima in World War II. And it's his dream to put one in every state. This is the Michigan initiative and Hershel Woody Williams will be here to unveil the monument," Eckstein said.