



Photo by JB Clark

Billy Watts and Leonard Temple work installing a curb in front of Jessica's Garden, a memorial garden at Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Olive Branch.

Memorial garden to support parents who survive children

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OLIVE BRANCH - Parishioners of Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Olive Branch have come together to remember a fallen member of their parish and in doing so are inviting the community to remember their lost loved ones as well.

Jessica's Garden is a memorial garden named after Jessica Gresham who died in a car accident when she was 18, two years ago.

The garden features a heart-shaped flower bed that was planted last year and parish members built a fence of redwood cedar to hang plaques for parents to remember their children who have died.

"The heart design is two-fold," said Leonard Temple, youth minister for the church.

Parents from the community who have lost a child are invited to hang a plaque memorializing their child at the church.

"Not only did Jessica have a huge heart and care for so many people, it symbolizes the broken hearts of parents who lose a child."

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"It makes us feel so good that they have been so kind to us," said Pat Laine, Gresham's grandmother. "It not only acknowledges my granddaughter but all the other people in the parish

who have had children that have died before their parents. It's heartwarming that they think that much of our child."

Temple is hoping to find a landscaper who is willing to donate time to help with the garden. It has been built with donated money and volunteer time.

Gresham was a senior at DeSoto Central High School when she died in a car accident on November 15, 2009.

"When I was at her funeral, I was trying to imagine how we could memorialize such a spectacular person who made such a difference in so many people's lives in such a short period of time," Temple said.

Temple said interest in the wall is growing and they will begin hanging the plaques as soon as the wall is finished.