

SILVERTON HIGH SCHOOL



MOLLY J. SMITH / STATESMAN JOURNAL FILE

Community members light candles at a vigil for Douglas Bonham and Matthew Kutnerian Albrecht at Bethany Charter School in Silverton on March 7, 2016. Many students from Silverton High School, where Matthew was a junior, attended the vigil, some wearing Seattle Seahawks gear or shirts honoring his memory.

# Memorial garden to be dedicated

ANNETTE UTZ  
FOR THE APPEAL TRIBUNE

When Karyn Kutnerian's son, Silverton High junior Matthew Kutnerian Albrecht, was killed in a car accident along with Bethany Charter School teacher Douglas Bonham in March 2016, it was a time of shock and deep sorrow for Kutnerian and other community members.

In Matthew's memory and for all those students and staff members of SHS who have lost their lives while still part of the school, Karyn created the Silverton High School Memorial Garden.

A public garden dedication will be held at 3 p.m. on Memorial Day, Monday, May 29, on the school grounds, 1456 Pine St.

"I just didn't know how to cope with the loss and it's still a battle," Kutnerian said, her voice shaking. "I just wanted to do something to honor him. This doesn't erase the pain but it helps to ease it."

SHS Vice Principal Jodi Drescher and former Principal Mark Hannan had wanted to put in a memorial garden eight years ago but due to budget constraints and limited staffing, it just wasn't possible, Kutnerian explained. The communi-

ty rose up to see the dream realized. "After my son was killed, one mother in the community, Jennifer Jacobsen, started a GoFundMe account to help me pay Matthew's funeral expenses. I am a single mother and breast cancer survivor," Kutnerian said. "A little over \$8000 was raised by the Silverton community in my son's name, and what was left over after funeral expenses was used to fund the SHS Memorial Garden Project and Matthew Kutnerian Albrecht's Memorial Fountain within that garden."

She has been working with Drescher for the past 14 months to see the project through to completion before Matthew's class graduates in June.

A private dedication and initial planting took place on Saturday, May 20. A marble slab etched with the names of those lost while affiliated with SHS has been installed.

It currently dates back to 1978 with the intention of including earlier names as well.

"I need to give a big shout out to Kraemer's Nursery and E & R Nursery for all the plants they have donated and to Melissa Kuenzi, a landscape architect who did the design work," Kutnerian

said. She also thanks others who have donated their time and skills to the project: Jeremiah Runion for directing efforts in preparing the garden area and putting in ground lighting, Silverton High School senior students for the physical labor of preparing the ground, Wes Kuenzi for doing the electrical wiring, and Dan Shacher for tunneling a conduit under the walkway.

A special account (Silverton High School Memorial Garden) has been set up at Silverton High School to accept donations for the care, maintenance and expansion of the garden. Donations can be made and are tax deductible. Contact Melissa King at 503-873-6331 for more information.

Anyone who would like to donate garden art memorializing one of the students or teachers, or would like something special included in the public dedication, contact Kutnerian at [kkutnerian@gmail.com](mailto:kkutnerian@gmail.com) or 503-789-8668.

"I just hope we can provide a way to honor and remember those who have passed and create a support network, a safety net, for all those who have faced loss," Kutnerian said.



KARYN KUTNERIAN/SPECIAL TO THE APPEAL TRIBUNE  
The dedication of the Matthew Kutnerian Albrecht fountain in the new Silverton High School Memorial Garden took place earlier this month.

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