

Maura Caines, 17, designed her "Memorial for the Unborn" with a personal intention in mind. "My family, as well as many others I know, have been impacted by miscarriages," she said.

This fall, Caines will build a memorial for unborn children at St. Mary of Sorrows Church in Fairfax. She intends the service project for everyone, "whether mourning a miscarried child, suffering from an abortion or seeking to pray for unborn babies," she wrote on her [GoFundMe page](#) for the project.

A member of American Heritage Girls Troop 0683 at St. Raymond of Peñafort Church in Springfield, Caines designed the memorial to unite her love of service and the pro-life movement.

St. Mary of Sorrows is Caines' childhood church, and she wanted to give back to the parish in a special way.

"I wanted to create a place at St. Mary of Sorrows for families and people to come and pray, speak to God, and find peace within themselves, and remember their lost loved ones," Caines said.

The project will include a brick patio, garden bench, plants and a 4-foot-tall memorial statue of "Lady in Mourning." Donors can sponsor a brick for the patio, and their names will be written on a list placed under the patio. The memorial will sit to the left of the church.

"The place where it will be built is really beautiful because you can see in the windows of the church, right onto the altar," she said.

AHG is a Christian leadership program for girls from kindergarten to 12th grade. Caines' service project is a requirement for AHG's Stars and Stripes award, the highest level of recognition. A member's Stars and Stripes project requires at least 100 volunteer hours and must be completed before her 18th birthday. The project application and review process was rigorous, Caines said, "but other than that, the project has gone smoothly, and I've had a lot of support."

Caines will complete her project by December.

"Being a part of AHG has really made me who I am today," Caines said. "I think it's really important especially for young Catholic women to get involved with an organization that can really help them grow in their faith and become women of integrity."

To donate

Go to bit.ly/MemorialForTheUnborn