

# Honors for Marines

**Family plans nonprofit for 7 war dead**  
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BIG BEAR CITY - Relatives of Jared Landaker, a Marine from here who died in a fiery helicopter crash in February in Iraq, are turning their grief into action.

They are now in the process of forming the Seven Stars Foundation, a nonprofit organization that will hold events to raise money for injured military men and women and scholarships for Big Bear High School students.

"This is to honor Jared and all who have served," said his mother, Laura Landaker of Big Bear City.

The first scheduled event by the - so named because seven died in the helicopter crash - will be the Jared Landaker Memorial Run for Freedom on Sept. 29 in Big Bear Lake.

The run, to be held at Snow Summit Mountain Resort, will include a 5K, a 10K and a community walk of about one mile. There will also be vendors, music and food.

The goal of the nonprofit is to then hit the road and hold similar fundraising events in the towns where the other six victims lived.

"The best way to make it so their names are not forgotten is to bring that honor to them in their hometowns," said Landaker's uncle, Mark Clifton of Penn Valley.

Laura Landaker had originally hoped to hold an event, the Purple Fox Run, to raise

money for the Wounded Warrior Center at Camp Pendleton, when Landaker, 25, came home.

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But the University of La Verne graduate and standout Big Bear High athlete didn't come back when he was supposed to in February.

Assigned to fly casualty evacuations in combat zones, the CH-46 helicopter he was piloting on his final flight was picking up a box of blood to be delivered to the hospital in Baghdad.

But as the aircraft entered Karhna, Iraq, it was hit by a ground- to-air missile fired by insurgents and subsequently crashed.

Since then, the young Marine has been honored by not only his family, but also by the schools he attended, those who loved him in the Big Bear City community and politicians.

The school has created a memorial, and each year officials will pick an athlete in baseball or football to wear his number.

At the University of La Verne, where he earned a bachelor's degree in physics and was at the top of his class, a tree has been dedicated in his honor.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger had the flag fly at half-staff on the day of his death, and Landaker's name has been added to the Global War on Terrorism Wall of Honor in Old Town Sacramento.

More recently, his father, Joe Landaker, rode his motorcycle across the country in his son's memory in the Run for the Wall, a ride to the Vietnam Memorial in Washington to promote healing among all veterans, their families and friends. Laura Landaker accompanied him by car.

Joe Landaker was asked to lay a wreath to honor his son at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

In addition to the nonprofit, plans are in the works to name a 10-mile stretch of Highway 38, from the dam down to Paradise, the Jared Landaker Memorial Highway.

"We are in the infant stage with much of this, learning to crawl and walk," said Clifton. "But we will continue to do this so Jared's name is never forgotten."

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