

Cougars run for veterans

Students hope 5km will be annual event

Story and photos by Katie Archer

While the tomb of the unknown soldier is remembered and respected, the vets who have returned home want us to remember them too. To serve those who have served America, Clackamas Community College will be hosting the first annual 5km Cougar Run on Saturday, May 30. All proceeds from this run will go to benefit the veterans here at CCC. The Cougar Run will feature a number of different obstacles, all military themed.

The influence for the run came from ASG senator of grants, Robert Rutherford. "I've kept this idea in the back of everyone's mind all year and now we're having this run," said Rutherford. "I like to think of this run as my baby but I can't take all the credit."

The ultimate goal for the Cougar Run is to be an

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— *Johnney Russ*

annual event with a new beneficiary each year. This year the race committee had a few members that are vets and knew that the Vet Center needed to be able to help any vet that came through its doors.

Veterans services coordinator, R.B. Green said, "A lot of the veterans we help need resources and not all are qualified for the some great educational programs everyone knows about." Green had served 20 years in the Army and has done the transition between civilian life and military life a few times and has helped many students in that life transition.



Robert Rutherford tests the course before the Cougar Run.

There was a five person committee, with help from Green. "It was all a student idea that bubbled up as a way to bring the community together and do something fun and healthily," said Green.

ASG vice president Johnney Russ, who served in the Marines, organized the vendors that will be at the Cougar Run. "My big thing is it's great to put on an event, it's great to have fun and to raise money," said Russ "But as a vet, if I'm not giving you any resources to help empower yourself, you're not doing a lot of good without education."

One of the vendors that will be at the Cougar Run is called Lines for Life, a suicide prevention center. If someone who is in crisis calls the Veterans Affairs and the VA can't take the call, the call gets transferred to Lines for Life. These kinds of vendors are helpful to both vets and their families.

"They served us, it's our time to serve them," said Russ.

Incoming ASG president Brent Finkbeiner, who served in the Army, said, "It helps the community be aware of what's out there for veterans because a lot of people may not be veterans, but are close to one and have a loved one that they would like to know that there is support."

The need right now is for runners. There are lots of people who signed up as volunteers, which is great, but the Cougar Run needs a lot more runners.

Encouraging people to sign up, Veterans Club president and Cougar Run committee member, Tiffany Johnson said, "First and foremost it's going to be a lot of fun."

Johnson, who served in the Air Force, knows the committee has realistic goals for this first year and they are learning how to make next year's run better, if this first Cougar Run is a success.

To help with the success, grab a friend and sign up on www.active.com and search for Clackamas Cougar Run and pay a fee of \$25 for students and veterans and \$30 for everyone else. But wait there's more! If you register between May 23-29, there is a promo price of \$15 for everyone with online registration.

What all is included in the run fee? "You know a hamburger meal on its own plus drink and a chip is what you're going to get," said Rutherford, who is described by Green as the most militaristic guy



ASG Member Candice Stauffer goes through the tire run obstacle.

who has never served a day in the military. "What's that going to cost you? \$10. A t-shirt, at least is going to cost you \$15 or more off the shelf. To experience being a part of something in the community and knowing your money is going to a good cause. Priceless. Priceless."

For students looking to support their veterans and can't make it to the Cougar Run. There is the Veterans Club open to everybody not just veterans. Getting involved with the local community and showing the veterans that they are cared about. A simple powerful way to support veterans is thanking them.

"My thoughts, number one, if you see a vet thank them," said Russ. "A simple thank you for your service has an incredible impact to us."

Registration for the Cougar Run is \$30, which includes a T-shirt, water bottle and food. For students and veterans, the price is \$25. The Cougar Run kicks off on May 30 at 8 a.m. The runners start at 10 a.m. at the Community Center.