

Warm Springs, regional events marking day of recognition

The Warm Springs coalition, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives, this Saturday, May 6 will hosting the Say Their Relay Marathon.

The relay-marathon will begin at 7 a.m. at the Warm Springs Rodeo Grounds, and conclude at the Simnasho Longhouse. A meal will follow. Twelve teams had signed up as of earlier this week, with more expected, said Reina Estimo, event coordinator.

For the marathon-relay, there will be both walking and running categories. Talk with Reina Estimo or Raylene Thomas for more information. Or email: mmirwarmsprings@gmail

For the May 6 marathon-relay, there will be nine course legs and eight exchanges along the 26-mile course, in honor of missing and murdered Indigenous relatives.

The Warm Springs MMIR event is part of the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

The recognition day is May 5, and events are planned across the region, the nation and Canada on and around that date.

The Day of Recognition began in 2017: Lawmakers in Montana at the time decalred the recognition day in response to the murder of Hanna Harris on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. Her birth-day was 5.

The recognition is also calls attention to the overall crisis level of missing and murdered Indigenous people across Indian Country.

As the initiave began some years ago, the focus was on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, as abductions and murders of the Native women and girls has truly been appalling: The murder rate is ten times higher



than the national average for Native women living on reservations, and is the third leading cause of death for Native women, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Since the inception of the movement, more grassroots efforts—like the Warm Springs MMIR—have grown, as Indigenous families, advocates and Indigenous nations continue to call attention to the violence, and bring about a response to the crisis.

Besides the May 6 Warm Springs MMIR marathon-relay, some other events around the Northwest include:

This Thursday and Friday, May 4-5 in Toppenish, Washington, the Yakama Nation Behavioral Health Victim Resource Program will have an MMIP Symposium and awareness walk. The symposium takes place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. May 4 at Legends Casino, 580 Fort Road. Kelly Jackson will be the keynote speaker. Registration begins at 8 a.m. General admission tickets to the symposium are free and available online.

Events continue May 5 at the Legends Casino, beginning at 8:30 a.m.

An awareness walk will take place at 11 a.m. that day. Check the VRP REDgalia Facebook page for updates. Contact Crystal Esquivel at 509-502-4082 or: Crystal_Esquivel@Yakama.com for more information.

There is also a related exhibit at

the Yakama Nation Museum at the Yakama Nation Cultural Center. Elsewhere:

On May 6 in Seattle, the third annual Missing, Murdered Indigenous Women, People and Families March and Gathering for Healing and Justice will take place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Meet at Westlake Park, 401 Pine St., at 10 a.m.

The march begins there at 11 a.m. and ends at the Seattle Center Amphitheater, 305 Harrison St. There will be speakers and other activities there from noon to 4 p.m.

All impacted family members are invited to participate, so participants may highlight and uplift their stories, and the stories of their loved ones, said founder and executive director Roxanne White.

Family members and friends of MMIWP who plan to attend are asked to visit the event page at: bit.ly/MMIWP-Families-May6

And click ‘going’ or email or message, if you have a question, to Ms. White at email: roxanne@mmiwpfamilies.org

Participants are asked to wear red, and Roxanne encourages anyone to bring drums, rattles, songs, banners and prayers.

In The Dalles this Friday, May 5 the Columbia River Round Dance in honor of Missing and Murdered Indigenous people will be from 4:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Wahtonka Community School, 3601 W. 10th St.

The first 150 people at this free community awareness and healing event will receive a t-shirt designed by Speakthunder Art.

There will be tables with Native businesses and artists, and members of the Iksiks Washanah’p (the Little Swans) dance group will perform. The group performs dances and shares stories that have been handed down from generation to

generation, celebrating and preserving the culture of the Yakama Nation.

Speakers, singers and drummers are also part of the event. Those attending are encouraged to bring photos to honor their loved ones. Email cherkshan@crtf.org for more information.

An update earlier this month said seven teams were registered, including one running in honor of Mavis May Anne Kirk and Lisa Pearl Briseno. Ms. Kirk died in 2009 after she was allegedly run over deliberately, but the driver was never charged.

Ms. Briseno, who is a relative of Ms. Kirk, has been missing since late August 1997. She was last seen in Portland.

In some U.S. countries composed primarily of Native American lands, murder rates of Native American women are up to 10 times higher than the national average for all races.

Indigenous women are seven times more likely than other women to be victims of a homicide.

Murder is the third leading cause of death for Native American women.

MISSING

KENDRA SOHAPPY

Age: 25

Sex or gender: Female

Race: American Indian

Eyes: Brown

Hair: Black/Brown

Height: 5'5"

Weight: 130

Tattoos: See Additional

Photos on Next Page

LAST SEEN: APRIL 27, 2023 near Toppenish, WA

IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT Kendra Sohappy, CONTACT:

Umatilla Tribal PD: (541)278-0550

Det. Tony Barnett: (541)612-2007

