Vietnam vets encouraged to attend virtual town hall

HERMISTON HERALD

Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs Director Kelly Fitzpatrick will host a live virtual town hall for Vietnam veterans on Thursday, March 25 at noon via Zoom.

Fitzpatrick will also be joined by a special guest, Renaye Murphy, executive director of the Portland Regional Office of the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA).

Veterans can register online at oregon.gov.odva/ Connect/Pages/Townhalls. aspx.

Questions for Director Fitzpatrick or Director Murphy may be submitted in advance by emailing orvetsbenefits@odva. state.or.us before March 22, according to a news release.

Registration is recommended but not required. Callers and questions will be welcomed on a "first come, first served" basis. Live closed captioning will be available for the video portion of this event. Registrants will receive a link to the virtual event via email.

To call in for the meeting without registering, dial 877-853-5247, and use meeting ID 811 7856 3418. The passcode is 295308.

The live event on March 25 will cover earned benefits and other resources available to Vietnam veterans and their families, including disability compensation, Agent Orange exposure and presumptive diseases, health care and behavioral health services — as well as more recent changes to benefits such as the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019.

Trained and federally accredited veteran service officers and other benefits experts will be on hand to provide direct assistance to participants, including filing a claim for benefits or an appeal if they have been denied previously.

In addition to providing information, the purpose of the event is for the directors of both agencies to hear directly from Vietnam veterans about their experience accessing benefits and challenges they have encountered.

Dashing for Diapers

Annual Diaper Dash collects supplies for people in need

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The Hermiston Nazarene Church has collected more than 70,900 diapers for families in need over the past seven years.

The church collects diapers each year during its annual Diaper Dash and distributes the supply to local families and to organizations and programs that support them. This year's event took place on Saturday, March 6, at the church.

Usually participants in the 5K and 10K event all start together, but to encourage social distancing participants were allowed to start their walk or run any time between 9-11 a.m. More than 100 people participated, according to the church, and each brought a large supply of diapers as their entrance fee. Participants ranged in age from children to senior citizens and included skateboarders, dog walkers and children riding bicycles.
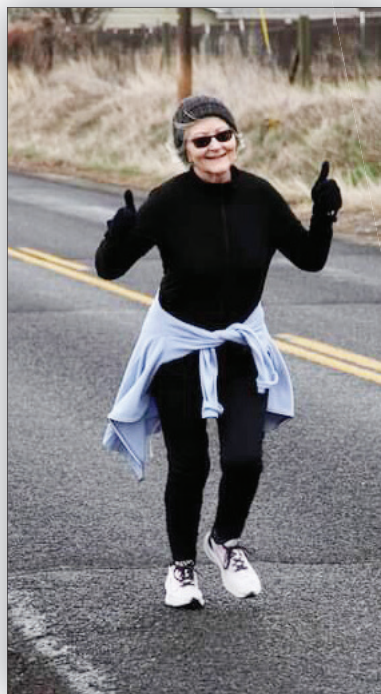
According to an email from Hermiston Nazarene Church, the event started seven years ago when a group of young adults from the church asked how they could help the community.

"We have found this to be a fun event to get together as locals to help our community," the email stated.

Hermiston Church of the Nazarene/Contributed Photo

Above, runners and walkers for the annual Diaper Dash wait to register outside the Hermiston Church of the Nazarene on Saturday, March 6, 2021. Below left, a walker participates in the event.

Church of the Nazarene/Contributed Photo

Above, participants in the annual Diaper Dash take a photo together. At right, runners, walkers and even a skateboarder participate in the annual Diaper Dash, which has collected more than 70,900 diapers for c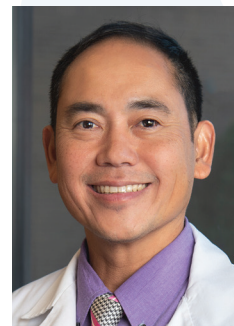hildren in need over the past seven years.