

'I Don't Want this Program Going to Waste'

VFW member urges others to meet with veterans and break bread

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A Vietnam War veteran in Washington hopes a program that he began continues for generations to come.

VFW Department of Washington member Bob Rawe, who served in the Air Force, began treating veterans to a meal at his home in 2008.

"My goal was to thank our military veterans – young and old – for the honorable service," Rawe said. "When the bombs quit falling, we veterans are forgotten. Before they die, we need to take them to lunch and listen to their stories. They would be very thankful."

To help fund the program, Rawe would take reservations from nonveterans who pay \$40 for a meal for 4 people. This would help with the cost of feeding a veteran and their family for free. Rawe also said he would receive food donations from the community.

"I would always start with a funny story from when I was in the Air Force," said Rawe, who served in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969. "Some veterans would also tell a funny story, but some would tell more serious stories. It was one way to honor them."

Rawe said he no longer sponsors meals with veterans but wants to continue the program through others.

"I'm too old to keep the program going," Rawe said. "I have all this information about the program, including how I made it a nonprofit organization through the state of Washington. I don't want this program going to waste. I would rather give someone this information than end this wonderful program."

Rawe encourages VFW members to contact him to learn more about how to start a program like Take a Vet to Lunch.

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For those interested in learning more about the program, send an email to dspiva@vfw.org.