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## **Vital Wines to Fund Community Health Worker Position to Provide Better Access, Resources to Spanish-Speaking Communities**

*Nonprofit winery sponsors creation of “Vital Wines Promotores de Salud,” funding a new, full-time position aimed at increased awareness and improved health of Latinx community members.*

**WALLA WALLA, WA (October 19, 2021)** – [Vital Wines](#), a 501c(3), non-profit winery that directs 100 percent of its net profits to support vineyard and winery workers, is honored to announce its sponsorship of the new Vital Wines Promotores de Salud position with the Population Health division of Providence Medical Group Southeast Washington. Vital’s commitment helps fund a new, full-time community health worker to provide on-the-ground access to health education and resources—including COVID-19 safety, prevention, and vaccination information—to Spanish-speaking community members.

Fortified by a \$30,000 grant from the Auction of Washington Wines and sustained by the continued support of its many donors and volunteers, Vital Wines has partnered with Providence St. Mary Foundation to establish the initiative. Generous support from Vital Wines, Sherwood Trust, and individual donors have made it possible for Providence St. Mary Foundation to fund the launch of this initiative, which will be maintained with ongoing support and fundraising efforts.

“Vineyard and winery workers are essential to our state’s \$8 billion wine industry, but they often lack access to reliable, affordable healthcare and other important resources,” said Maddie Richards, Executive Director of Vital Wines. “Our sponsorship of the Vital Wines Promotores de Salud position furthers our mission to support the health, dignity, and inclusion of these important, yet largely underserved, members of our community.”

After an extensive search, the position was accepted by Maria Remington, a bilingual Walla Walla educator and dedicated volunteer with a legacy of community service—particularly among local Spanish-speaking and immigrant residents.

“As a member of the Latinx community myself, I see the challenges faced by Spanish-speaking parents, kids, and workers every day, and I uniquely understand the disconnection many feel from healthcare systems and other important services.” said Remington. “This role gives me the opportunity to do what I love most—sharing information, education, and resources that have the power to improve lives in my community and beyond.”

The COVID-19 Pandemic continues to shine harsh light on health inequities among minority groups across the nation. Hispanic or Latinx people have nearly twice the risk of contracting the virus and are more than twice as likely to die from it than White or Non-Hispanic Americans.<sup>i</sup> In Washington State, the Latinx community represents just 13% of the population yet 27% of total cases.<sup>ii</sup> While these disparities

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can be attributed to many complex factors, the need for increased outreach, information, and access to health resources within these communities is greater than ever.

“Our primary focus is on preventing illness and suffering before it happens, and a huge part of that work relies on community health workers who can meet our most vulnerable populations where they are,” said Becky Betts, Director of Population Health Integration for Providence in Southeast Washington. “Our partnership with Vital Wines allows us to better share preventative, life-saving information and resources with an important segment of our community—whether on the sidewalk, on the crush pad, or in the vineyard.”

Creation of the Vital Wines Promotores de Salud follows a series of impactful giving programs in the nonprofit winery’s five-year history. From the recent “Day at Home” program, which pays full daily wages for vineyard and winery workers when infected or exposed to COVID-19, to giving more than \$30,000 since 2017 to SOS Health Services of Walla Walla, providers of a free, bilingual, community healthcare center offering medical services to un- and underinsured individuals, Vital is committed to finding creative ways for its industry and community to take care of one another.

The impact of Vital Wines is made possible through the generous contributions of donors, volunteers, and partners. Vital Wines can be purchased online, from select retailers, or at its recently opened tasting room in downtown Walla Walla, where all net profits go towards supporting Vital’s mission.

## ABOUT VITAL WINES

Vital Wines is a community-driven, 501c(3), non-profit organization that dedicates 100 percent of its net profits to support the health, dignity, and inclusion of vineyard and winery workers. Driven entirely by a dedicated community of donors and volunteers, Vital produces award-winning wines with purpose, dedicating all profits to programs and organizations that support vineyard and winery workers—including SOS Health Services of Walla Walla, providers of a free, bilingual healthcare clinic **[NOTE: Currently by appointment only due to COVID-19]** located in the Walla Walla Valley. Through wine sales, direct donations, events, and special programs, our collective efforts aim to raise awareness, provide critical resources, and create a sense of belonging for our vineyard and winery colleagues and friends. [www.vitalwinery.com](http://www.vitalwinery.com)

## ABOUT PROVIDENCE ST. MARY FOUNDATION

Providence St. Mary Foundation is a local, non-profit organization. Our mission is to invest in programs, technology and equipment to ensure that exceptional health care continues close to home at [Providence St. Mary Medical Center](#). Every dollar raised stays in Walla Walla. Our foundation is led by a group of 20 Board members who live in the area and understand the needs of our community.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/investigations-discovery/hospitalization-death-by-race-ethnicity.html#footnote01>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/DataDashboard>