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Take a walk and drink some wine for women's health

Fundraiser helps uninsured and underinsured women throughout the Rogue Valley

By Sanne Specht

Grab your walking shoes and sign up to take a Sunday stroll, sampling the offerings at three Applegate wineries during the Wine Walk for Women's Health.

Money raised during the Sept. 20 event—sponsored by Rogue Valley-area Soroptimist clubs—pays for prevention, detection, treatment and support services for uninsured and underinsured women and girls in our community, said Peg Crowley, executive director of the Community Health Center.

The fundraiser helps support local programs that provide no-cost or low-cost health screenings for women and girls at a critical time.

“We need the wine walk to be successful,” Crowley said. “Our resources are so diminished, and there are so many women in need.”

Melanie Madden, soroptimist and event organizer, said the event will benefit programs at the American Cancer Society, Asante, Oregon Advanced Imaging, Ashland Community Hospital and the Community Health Center.

A \$35 ticket entitles participants to a five-mile walk through the Applegate Valley, where they will taste nine wines at three local wineries — Wooldridge Creek, Troon and Bridgeview, Madden said.

In addition to the wine, water, sandwiches and energy bars are included in the ticket price, she said. “At Troon Winery, we supply a pretty hefty snack,” said Madden.

The wineries have allowed participation to increase from 300 to 350 in the first two years. This year it is limited to 400 people. And tickets are going fast, said Madden. “It’s a very popular event. About 50 tickets are still available. We sell out every year,” she said.

Some of the 23 sponsored teams of wine tasters travel the five-mile course dressed in colorful costumes. One group has titled themselves “women who wine for a cause,” Madden said.

If you go

What: Third annual Wine Walk for Women's Health.

When: Sunday, Sept. 20; check-in at noon, walk starts at 1 p.m.

Includes: Five-mile stroll through the Applegate Valley; wine tasting at three vineyards; raffle; entertainment; snacks and gift for all participants.

Why: Raise money for uninsured and underinsured women.

Who: Rogue Valley-area Soroptimist clubs.

More information: Call Melanie Madden at 621-8219 or visit www.siwinewalk.org.

Sag wagons are available for those who find the stroll a bit too strenuous — or who may have stocked up on bottles of discounted wine the three wineries will be offering in support of the event.

One change from previous years that most people will appreciate is the reversal of the route, Madden said. “Before it was uphill most of the way,” she said. “Now it’s down hill.”

Crowley said the funds raised will help save lives. Too often underinsured and uninsured women, usually over the age of 40, skip on the potentially life-saving scans in order to save on medical costs. Advances in treatment and recovery rates are improving. But early

detection is still key, Crowley said.

“We need to address the issue of mammography,” Crowley said. “Women of the world wake up. You are too important to be lost. Your children need you, your husband needs you, and your friends and family need you.”

Crowley urged those who can't walk on Sept. 20 to consider sending a check. “Send a contribution anyway. You could save a life,” she said.

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