



WILLAMETTE VALLEY  
WINE **FOUNDATION**



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WVWF CONTACT | *Bridget Jackson, Nexus Public Relations* | [bridget@nexus-pr.com](mailto:bridget@nexus-pr.com)

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PRIMEROS PASOS CONTACT | *Xochitl Torralba, CAPACES Leadership Institute* | [xochitl@capacesleadership.org](mailto:xochitl@capacesleadership.org)

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Willamette Valley Wine Foundation Collaborates with Primeros Pasos Consortium to Fund Early Childhood Education and Care Initiatives in Polk County

Demonstrating the power of strategic partnerships  
to build strong foundations for young minds

**INDEPENDENCE, Ore.** - Maria Santana recently celebrated the grand opening of Marety's Daycare, her new family child care home in the rural community of Independence, with the vision of creating "un lugar donde los niños son felices y seguros" – a place where children are happy and safe.

Her vision to provide quality care for the children of her community arrived at the right place and time. Marety's Daycare now provides a much-needed vital early education and child care resource in the Willamette Valley, where only a fraction of the necessary services are available— licensed programs currently serve just 1 in 8 infants and toddlers, and only 1 in 4 preschoolers.

Maria's new business venture was brought to life as a result of her involvement with an innovative collaboration between the Primeros Pasos Consortium and the Farmworker Housing Development Corporation that was created to establish equitable access to quality family child care homes within affordable housing communities. As part of an initiative formed by the CAPACES Leadership Institute, Primeros Pasos was established to assess and develop strategies for enhancing early learning and care for Latino and Indigenous children and families in the Mid-Willamette Valley.

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PO Box 25162 | Portland, OR 97298



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**CONTACT** | *Bridget Jackson, Nexus Public Relations*    **EMAIL** | [bridget@nexus-pr.com](mailto:bridget@nexus-pr.com)    **PHONE** | 562.587.9032

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**PRIMEROS PASOS CONTACT** | *Xochitl Torralba, CAPACES Leadership Institute* | [xochitl@capacesleadership.org](mailto:xochitl@capacesleadership.org)

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This initiative inspired a call to action from the Willamette Valley Wine Foundation, a Portland-based nonprofit whose mission seeks to enhance the lives and livelihoods of the rural residents of Polk, Marion, and Yamhill counties. By becoming part of the consortium, the Foundation was able to provide a \$25,000 grant to assist community members like Santana obtain training in business practices and child care certifications.

The grant was the Foundation's first major philanthropic gift, which also demonstrated their commitment to facilitating opportunities in professional career development and early childhood education, two of its four core areas of work.

"We are excited to see the results of the Foundation's early success in building partnerships and convening resources to boost the economic and educational well-being of children and families in the Willamette Valley," said Morgen McLaughlin, executive director. "We hope that our collaborative efforts as a part of the Primeros Pasos Consortium is the beginning of a long-standing partnership that will help the Foundation meet its target investment goal of \$4 million in support of affordable early childhood education and care facilities by 2030," she added.

"I'm proud to see how our program has grown from a vision to a powerful force for change, said Lucy Escobar, project manager, CAPACES Leadership Institute. We're empowering educators to build better futures for themselves, their families, and the children they care for. Together, we're creating lasting impact and a legacy of opportunity for future generations."

Maria's daughter, Veronica, has now partnered in the business as an emerging child care professional in her own right, having begun her coursework as an early childhood educator. Both mother and daughter have recently been selected for scholarships made possible by Primeros Pasos at Clackamas Community College to obtain their Associate of Applied Science Degrees in Early Childhood Education and Family Studies.

For more information about the Willamette Valley Wine Foundation and its mission, please contact Morgen McLaughlin, Executive Director at [morgen@willamettewines.com](mailto:morgen@willamettewines.com).



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## **About the Willamette Valley Wine Foundation**

Rooted in the collaborative spirit of early Oregon wine innovators, the Willamette Valley Wine Foundation exists to transform communities by enhancing the health, homes, and livelihoods of workers in wine-growing communities throughout the Willamette Valley.



Marety's Daycare is the first registered family child care home that was established through a professional development program funded in part by the Willamette Valley Wine Foundation. As a result of a strategic collaboration with the Primeros Pasos Consortium, Maria Santana and her daughter, Veronica, benefited from a grant that was implemented to recruit and train new early childhood educators and care providers in Polk County and surrounding rural communities. The program prepares them to obtain the necessary education and licensure to open their businesses.