



Feb. 20, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Steve Maher, OVOF coordinator, 509-630-2090 or info@ourvalleyourfuture.org; Stacy Luckensmeyer, OVOF Board president, 509-670-7787 or sluckensmeyer@wvc.edu

OVOF to focus on advancing regional thinking, inclusion, collaboration in 2020

WENATCHEE — Our Valley Our Future / Nuestro Valle Nuestro Futuro will focus on advancing the One Community Game-Changer project during 2020, the nonprofit collaborative organization announced today.

The game-changer, one of seven such projects in the OVOF Action Plan, calls on organizations in the region to collaborate, leverage their resources, and increase their efficiencies and effectiveness.

“This game-changer project is at the heart of OVOF’s mission, which is to unite the region and work toward a prosperous future,” said Steve Maher, OVOF project coordinator. “We’ve seen other game-changers, regional in scope, show excellent progress over the past three years, and the OVOF Board believes the timing is right to dedicate more resources toward the One Community Game-Changer.”

Since May 2019, an OVOF One Community Working Group has been meeting, researching and drafting a white paper on “Regional Thinking, Inclusion and Collaboration.” The report, which will include a list of opportunities for policy makers, community leaders and residents to consider, is expected to be released in March or April this year.

Communications and implementation work will follow the white paper’s release.

In December, OVOF will report back to the community on progress made by the game-changer during the year.

OVOF also plans to devote significant resources in 2020 to the Regional Housing Game-Changer and the Technology Hub Game-Changer, said OVOF Board President Stacy Luckensmeyer.

“At its core, the One Community Game-Changer is about building this region for all of us, and tapping into everyone’s strengths,” Luckensmeyer said. “It is a unique opportunity to bring people together to share voices and to move the valley forward collectively. This is hard but necessary work. That said, the potential of regional thinking and inclusion here is limitless.

“The game-changer also is closely connected to other game-changers in the OVOF plan — Regional Housing, Tech Hub, Early Childhood Learning, Alleviating Generational Poverty, Wenatchee Valley TREAD, and The Bridge Research and Innovation District — so there is a strong interconnectedness,” she

said. “For example, it takes the entire community to fix housing. And without housing, there is no community.”

The One Community Working Group, in drafting its report, found regional thinking has long been part of North Central Washington’s DNA but that the approach is needed more than ever today given the challenges impacting local communities. Many of those issues — such as housing, education, employment, health care, cultural integration, population growth, and infrastructure demands — know no boundaries and are part of a rapidly changing landscape. In its deliberations, the Working Group expanded the concept of regional thinking to also include inclusion and collaboration because not everything can be looked at from a regional or two-county focus. Pushing for mergers is not the intent of OVOF or the Working Group.

Those on the One Community Working Group include:

- Teresa Bendito, Parque Padrinos neighborhood group
- Bob Bugert, Chelan County Commission
- Shiloh Burgess, Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Bart Clennon, Wenatchee fruit rancher and retired actuary
- Linda Evans Parlette, North Central Accountable Community of Health
- Stacy Luckensmeyer, Wenatchee Valley College
- Steve Maher, Our Valley Our Future
- Jessi Mendoza, Numerica Credit Union
- Karen Rutherford, Flywheel Investment Conference and Pinnacles Prep
- Peter Rutherford, Confluence Health
- Dan Sutton, Douglas County Commission
- Spencer Taylor, Eastmont School District
- Rufus Woods, Wenatchee World
- Steve Wright, Chelan County PUD

OVOF, founded in 2015, is a collaborative nonprofit organization that brings together residents and organizations to improve the region’s quality of life. Its guiding document is the OVOF Action Plan, which includes more than 150 projects led by partnering organizations. OVOF serves as convener, facilitator, data-collector, planner and communicator. For more: www.ourvalleyourfuture.org.

###