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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Annual Heritage University event raises \$678,250 for student scholarships

Toppenish, Wash. – The Bounty of the Valley Scholarship Dinner, the premier annual event in the Yakima Valley dedicated to raising scholarship funds for Heritage University students, brought in \$678,250 this past weekend.

This year marked the 32nd anniversary of the event that celebrates the many talented men and women who are transforming their lives and our communities enabled by the gifts of the generous individuals who make it possible for them to earn their college degrees.

Heritage University students served as hosts for the 250 guests of the event, welcoming them as they arrived on campus, sharing their Heritage experiences and expressing their gratitude for their ongoing investment in the university. Heritage mathematics major Brandon Berk, who served as the student speaker during the event, was honored to represent the many students like him who have excelled because of the scholarships they have received. "I had thought of going to college but didn't think I'd ever have the opportunity to attend because of money," said Brandon during his speech. "I was very close to joining the military like others in my family, but then I received the Act Six scholarship, which has led to numerous opportunities including being published in a peer reviewed journal as an undergraduate; receiving internships at prestigious universities, including the University of Virginia and the University of Chicago; and working with mentors who are guiding him to his goal of earning a Ph.D. in Mathematics. Without Heritage and the Act Six scholarship, attending college would have been almost impossible," he said.

Virginia S. Hislop, an organizer of the very first Bounty of the Valley event 32 years ago and who has attended every year since, was overjoyed by the turnout and generosity of longtime donors, new supporters and guests. "The scholarship monies raised at this event level the playing field for our students who are every bit as capable and talented as any student in the country, but who often do not have the same financial resources," said Hislop. "By giving to our scholarship fund, our donors are making an investment in their community because our students go on to become the doctors, nurses, teachers and business leaders who will work here, in

the Yakima Valley,” she said.

Since its inception 32 years ago, more than \$5.7 million has been raised at the event, with every dollar going directly to student scholarships. Senior Director of Donor Development and organizer of the Bounty of the Valley, Dana Eliason, said it’s an amazing experience to watch our donor community and our students get together at this event year after year. “Our donors often experience a strong emotional response when they meet the students and hear their stories of accomplishments made possible by their generosity. It’s magical!” she said.

For more information or to make a donation to student scholarships, contact Dana Eliason at (509) 865-0441 or eliason_d@heritage.edu.

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