

You value local news. We need your support. Subscribe to OregonLive

Wine

Million-dollar convoy of Oregon wine delivers smiles to coronavirus caregivers

Posted May 07, 2020

3

Oregon wineries pitch in for healthcare workers

1.3k
shares

A “little snowball” of an idea placed a million dollars worth of wine in the hands of health care workers from Eugene to Portland. This gift of wine is the Willamette Valley wine industry’s way of saying “thank you” to the people risking their lives on the COVID-19 front lines.

On May 4-5, employees from the [Newberg Mail Room](#), [Mitchell Wine Group](#), [Galaxy Wine Company](#) and [Northwest Distribution and Storage](#) loaded their vans with 1,413 cases of wine and 268 cases of non-alcoholic sparkling wine grape juice. The bottles were delivered to [Oregon Health Sciences University](#) (OHSU) and [Legacy Health](#) in Portland, [Providence Newberg Medical Center](#), and [PeaceHealth Medical Group](#) and [McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center](#) in Eugene.

Advertisement

154 wineries donated the wines as part of the Willamette Valley Wineries Association’s “[Wines for the Front Lines](#)” project. The bottles were handed out to hospital employees at the end of their shifts. “The donation is valued at over \$1 million, but the wineries mostly just wanted to acknowledge the caregivers and say ‘thank you for your service and for putting yourself at risk,’” said Scott Shull of [Raptor Ridge Winery](#) in Newberg.

Shull describes the idea for the project as a “little snowball that got bigger and bigger as it rolled downhill.”

The idea of giving bottles of wine to health care workers was initially inspired by the generosity of Paul Bachand, the owner of [Recipe](#) restaurant in Newberg. Shull and his wife, Annie, learned Bachand was donating meals to employees at the Providence Newberg

Medical Center. “Thinking people might like a bottle of wine with their meal, we asked Paul if we could tag along on his next delivery,” Shull said in a telephone interview.

The Shulls delivered 75 bottles of a 2014 pinot noir they originally created for the [iSalud! Oregon Pinot Noir Auction](#). Their wine was paired with beef stroganoff and braised greens prepared by Bachand. “The looks on people’s faces as they received the food and wine were moving. It said, ‘I need this. I appreciate this,’” Shull says.

Motivated by the smiles they received at Providence Newberg, the Shulls ended up delivering 62 cases of Raptor Ridge wines to four different hospital systems in the Portland metropolitan area. The Shulls also wondered if other wineries might like to follow suit.

A few weeks ago, Shull contacted the Willamette Valley Wineries Association, who then presented the idea at a weekly Zoom call. The response was swift. “By April 28, we had over 1,400 cases of wine, with the [Ponzi](#) family adding 268 cases of their ‘Cugini’ non-alcoholic sparkling grape juice,” Shull said.

#teamoregon

SUPPORTED BY

Fred Meyer[®]



[Submit your stories of kindness >](#)

Advertisement

Coronavirus in Oregon: [Latest news](#) | [Live map tracker](#) | [Text alerts](#) | [Newsletter](#)

Collecting and organizing more than 20,000 bottles is quite a logistical challenge.

Southern Willamette Valley donations were collected at [King Estate Winery](#)'s warehouse in Cottage Grove. Northwest Distribution and Storage in Salem collected the wines from Cottage Grove as well as those stored in their own warehouse for delivery to Eugene area hospitals and the Newberg Mail Room.

[Oregon Wine Services](#) in McMinnville and Tualatin managed the aggregation and trucking of wines from other parts of the valley to the Newberg Mail Room's storage facility. Newberg Mail Room owner Molly McDonnell and her staff sorted and organized the wines and non-alcoholic sparkling grape juice for delivery.

On May 4, a Newberg Mail Room van filled with 56 cases of wine arrived at the Providence Newberg Medical Center loading dock. After supervising the unloading of the wine, Providence maintenance planner Joanne Lynch said, "The generosity of the local community is amazing. This has been a humbling experience, to say the least."

-- Michael Alberty writes about wine for [The Oregonian/OregonLive](#). He can be reached at malberty0@gmail.com. To read more of his coverage, go to oregonlive.com/wine.

Subscribe to Oregonian/OregonLive [newsletters](#) and [podcasts](#) for the latest news and top stories.