Heritage University

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Heritage students honor groups' outstanding service

Toppenish, WA—They provide help to the homeless, a safe place for children to go after school, and assistance to foster children and their families. Now, three Lower Valley non-profit agencies are getting some well deserved recognition and a whole lot of eager volunteers.

Heritage University's Presidential Fellows and Yakama Reservation Leaders are recognizing Noah's Ark, a homeless outreach program in Wapato; Marie Rose House, a community and education center for women and children in Toppenish; and Yakama Nation Nak We Sha, a foster care program in Harrah at its first Civic Champion Awards on Friday, April 17 from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. in Smith Family Hall located in the Arts and Sciences Center on the Toppenish Campus.

Lino Gutierrez, advisor to the two student groups, explains that the awards are just one part in a two-year group project. Since September, Presidential Fellows and Yakama Reservation Leaders students have worked to identify non-profits that operate in the areas surrounding the campus. They interviewed each organization to learn about services provided and their needs. The students elected to honor the three recipients and to spend the remainder of this academic year and all of next year providing

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volunteer support to each of the non-profits. So far, their plans include holding drives for needed supplies, spending time mentoring youth after school, and working to build awareness about the non-profits and the people they serve.

“I feel really confident that we are doing what is right by giving back to our community,” said Heritage sophomore and English major Mattie Tomeo. “Hopefully ten to fifteen years from now when the youth we are helping grow up they will continue what we started by giving back as well.”

The Presidential Fellows and Yakama Reservation Leaders programs help Heritage students develop leadership skills through special opportunities and volunteerism. Students coordinate activities on and off campus and serve as University ambassadors.

The Civic Champion Awards are open to the public. There is no cost for admissions.

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