

## **Innovative Portland Teacher Partners with Virginia Garcia Memorial Foundation to Teach Youth about the Migrant Farmworker Experience in Oregon.**

**Portland students learn firsthand about the importance of healthcare for migrant farmworkers through a groundbreaking class design created by Jackson Middle School and Virginia Garcia Memorial Foundation.**

Portland, OR (November 18, 2008) – Donald Rose and David Wierth, of Jackson Middle School, are changing the landscape of the traditional sixth grade classroom in Portland. In collaboration with Virginia Garcia Memorial Foundation, Mr. Rose and Mr. Wierth are redefining conventional teaching methods to educate students about the barriers local migrant farmworkers often face when trying to access healthcare by placing them front and center in the world of service delivery to this population - without ever leaving the classroom.

No lecturing allowed! During this class, taking place on Wednesday, November 19, students take part in exercises that engage different learning styles. Students move through a series of 15 stations that present images, food, music, and text which speak to the migrant farmworker experience in Oregon and the barriers these workers may face when accessing healthcare. Such barriers often include language, income, and culture. After rotating through all of the stations, students take part in an open dialogue on healthcare delivery for migrant farmworkers. The discussion is moderated by Mr. Rose and Virginia Garcia staff.

“Providing a multi-sensory learning opportunity using sound, smell, taste, touch, and sight enables students to form memories around their experiences,” said Rose. “We all have a preferred learning style and hopefully this station-rotation approach will hit each one of those styles for all of my students. Creating an experience connects each student personally to the subject matter.”

Rose added that "the rise of agriculture is important to the rise of technologically advanced societies. I would like my students to understand the current US system of agriculture and the lives of the people who grow and process our food. The health of migrant farmworkers is critical to the health of our society. Virginia Garcia plays an important role in ensuring that anyone with barriers to care receives comprehensive, high quality and culturally appropriate primary healthcare."

“Mr. Rose’s classroom is a multidimensional stage where students no longer only rely on books and the internet, but also have direct exposure to local players influencing healthcare delivery to migrant farmworkers” notes Diana R. Walker, Executive Director of Virginia Garcia Memorial Foundation. “It’s

incredibly empowering for students to witness what's happening in their community and to play an active role in addressing local issues. We applaud Mr. Rose for taking the initiative to create innovative and powerful learning experiences for his students and are proud to be a partner with him in this movement.”

### **About Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center**

In 1975, Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center was founded in memory of six-year-old Virginia Garcia. While accompanying her farmworker parents to Oregon to pick berries, Virginia developed blood poisoning from a simple foot wound. Although attempts were made to treat her, the unavailability of appropriate cultural and lingual medical services ultimately resulted in her preventable death. Stunned by this tragedy, community leaders joined forces in an unprecedented effort to ensure that such a tragedy would never be repeated.

Today, Virginia Garcia is the only Federally Qualified Health Center in Washington and Yamhill Counties. Virginia Garcia serves over 30,000 community members with barriers to healthcare per year with 280 staff members in four medical clinics, three dental clinics, two school-based health centers, and a mobile clinic.

Media Contact: Diana R. Walker, Virginia Garcia Memorial Foundation, [dwalker@vgmhc.org](mailto:dwalker@vgmhc.org), 503.352.8608.