

Contact:

Sarah Yerden

Assistant Director DEV/COMM

509-455-3039 | sarah.yerden@cceasternwa.org

**Catholic Charities and Premera Blue Cross Partner to Help Families Heal through Rising Strong**

Spokane, Wash. – Premera Blue Cross has reaffirmed its support of Catholic Charities Eastern Washington and Empire Health Foundation to support the Rising Strong program. Premera has announced a Premera Social Impact grant of $175,000 over 2 years to support the holistic, innovative, family-centered substance use disorder treatment and housing program.

The announcement builds on Premera’s first investment in Rising Strong, which they made in 2017. Premera’s investment gives Rising Strong critical funding to support the program’s collaborative and innovative approach to solving complex behavioral health issues around substance use disorder and trauma.

Premera and Rising Strong recognize the urgent need to improve behavioral health outcomes for low-income residents and communities of color. Rising Strong prioritizes enrollment by families from Spokane’s American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

“I am grateful to have a partner that supports our work to serve the most vulnerable populations,” said Nadine Van Stone, Vice President of Crisis Response & Shelters. “Premera knows that by helping these families today, we improve health outcomes for their children.”

Rising Strong is a residential program that supports families in staying together while they begin to recover from addiction, heal from trauma and rebuild their lives. Rather than separating families through foster care, which leads to added trauma for children, Rising Strong offers a better way for the whole family to heal and overcome their challenges.

The program creates healthier families and children by helping parents overcome substance use and co-occurring disorders in a supervised family setting. Families receive housing and access whole-person treatment on-site, including case management for parents and children. This stabilizing care improves long-term health outcomes.

Rising Strong graduates must achieve stabilization in their addiction recovery; increased financial sustainability and independence through education, employment or other income; and strengthened their parenting skills. Rising Strong staff assists participants find and move into stable housing before they graduate.

With the past support from Premera, Rising Strong served 13 families and reunified 22 children with their parents in the first cohort. Premera’s renewed commitment allows Rising Strong to expand to its second cohort, which is serving 95 parents and children.

*Catholic Charities Eastern Washington affirms the dignity of our most vulnerable neighbors by providing social services across 13 counties. With our community partners in government, industry, and social services, we tackle the region’s biggest challenges, including homelessness and intergenerational poverty. We respond to community members in crisis by providing disaster relief, emergency assistance, and rapid rehousing. We stabilize lives by building affordable housing for veterans, seniors, chronically homeless individuals and families, and farmworkers, as well as provide access to fresh produce and connect seniors with volunteers to help with household chores. We advocate in hope by providing childbirth and parenting support and early learning, counseling, immigration legal services, and support for parishes.*

**About Premera Social Impact**

Premera Blue Cross, a not-for-profit, independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association based in Mountlake Terrace, Wash., launched the Premera Social Impact Program aimed at supporting behavioral health issues, particularly in underserved communities. Premera, which serves Washington and Alaska, believes that overall health will improve by addressing behavioral health issues — especially for people of color and low-income populations where community health data consistently shows treatment disparities exist. By treating behavioral health, people’s physical health will improve.

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