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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Say Yes to Education – Expanding Community Support for Students in Lind Ritzville**

SPOKANE, WA, September 2021 — A conversation about community perceptions and priorities around education – and a chance for residents to share a meal – will be the focus of a forum at *American Legion Building* in *Ritzville WA*, on *October 11*, from *5:30 to 7:30PM*. This will be an informal, fun event with a free dinner and free childcare.

The forum is the second of three community meetings led by Innovia Foundation in partnership with College Spark WA and the Lind Ritzville Cooperative Schools. Rural communities and schools have a shared stake in the success of local students. Setting youth on a supported course to education beyond high school is an investment in the community. During this interactive ‘Data Walk’, community members will have the opportunity to provide input and feedback on youth data and outcomes that will begin to shape common goals for children growing up in Lind Ritzville.

This will have an impact on community vitality. Even if residents do not have children currently attending school or a strong vested interest in education, it is essential to understand and support improvement in learning. It is important because it is an investment in the betterment of everyone’s society and the continuation of a prosperous economy, especially if today’s students are to become tomorrow’s leaders.

Additional foundations and community organizations also joined this 2021 efforts as sponsors and partners. “The Community Needs Assessment allows foundations to learn directly from residents about opportunities to support important work in their community,” noted Shelly O’Quinn, CEO of Innovia Foundation.

The assessment process included a community survey, sent to a random sample of households in rural areas of Washington. The survey results will be shared at the forum through a ‘data walk’. The data walk provides a fun and interactive way to share data and experiences in a way that can advance community change. They also provide the opportunity for community members to share about what it is like to live in this region by discussing needs and providing important input that will help guide local solutions.

"We are thrilled to be working, in partnership, with the Innovia Foundation and our Cooperative School Community to provide additional support for students by increasing pathways to success!" Says Don Vanderholm, Superintendent of Lind Ritzville Cooperative Schools.

More information about community data walks can be found at [innovia.org/events](http://innovia.org/events)

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Innovia Foundation ignites generosity that transforms lives and communities so that every person has the opportunity to thrive. As the community foundation for Eastern Washington and North Idaho, we partner with people who want to make our world better. We work together to address and solve our region's problems, help those in need, identify and respond to our greatest opportunities and leave a lasting impact. Each year, Innovia Foundation invests nearly \$10 million into our communities through grants and scholarships to nonprofit organizations and local students.