

PRESS RELEASE

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Holy Cross Hospital Foundation bids farewell to Toast of Taos *New Focus Means Foundation will no longer host event.*

Taos, New Mexico (September 2009) – After four years creating and hosting Toast of Taos, a multi-day wine festival held every summer in Taos, Holy Cross Hospital Foundation has decided to bid farewell to the event. The event succeeded as community outreach and public relations, but in the end it raised only a small amount of money. The event may continue in an abbreviated form under the hospital's new Community Relations and Planning Department, but no plans have been formed yet.

In 2006, the Foundation started Toast of Taos as a fund-raising and community outreach event. The adventure began in March 2006, when the New Mexico Vine and Wine Society approached the Foundation about taking over the Southwest Wine Competition, the only competition to feature wines from only southwestern states (Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico). Long considered mediocre, southwest wines in recent years had dramatically improved and were gaining national recognition.

At the time, the Foundation had recently reorganized and was seeking new fund-raising events to raise money to buy equipment for Holy Cross Hospital. The Foundation Board realized that the Southwest Wine Competition offered exceptional opportunities to develop a distinctive new event centered around southwest wines. In addition, although Taos was already known for great art, scenery, and climate, few realized that it was also blessed with some of the best restaurants in the Southwest. The Foundation believed the world was ready for an exciting new wine/food/art event, and Toast of Taos was born.

Since then, the Foundation has dedicated thousands of hours to developing Toast of Taos into an eagerly awaited annual gala that includes art gallery tours, auctions, wine dinners, wine classes, and wine tastings. Dozens of Taos-area businesses—art galleries, hotels, restaurants, banks, boutiques, spas, even lumber yards—have worked with the Foundation to provide venues for events, lodging for winemakers, and prizes for auctions. Winemakers have come from all over the Southwest and from Argentina to participate in Toast, providing visitors the opportunity to meet the artists behind the wines they were tasting. Wine-lovers from all over the US have converged on Taos each year for the festivities.

Although Toast of Taos has succeeded brilliantly as a public relations event, it has raised little money for hospital equipment. Foundation Director Sally Trigg states, "Toast of Taos has made less than \$10,000 profit every year since it started. Even with the great generosity of our many

sponsors and supporters, putting on such a huge event takes lots of money and immense amounts of time.” Trigg estimates that she and her assistant have spent over one third of their work time for the last three years preparing for, implementing, and following up on Toast of Taos. As Trigg says, “Toast of Taos has become a passion and a labor of love for the Foundation, but we need to get back to what we are here to do: raising money for Holy Cross Hospital.”

The Foundation wants to offer a big THANKS to the hundreds of artists, winemakers, business owners, sponsors, wine and art lovers, media representatives, volunteers, and wonderful people who have supported Toast of Taos and Holy Cross Hospital. Foundation Board President Judy Cockburn says it all: “The wonderful supporters of Toast and of the hospital are the reasons this event has become such a labor of love for us. From all of us at the Foundation, thank you so much!”

For now, Holy Cross Hospital Foundation is looking to a fund-raising future focused on continued community involvement, education about the hospital, and development of a hospital endowment and capital campaign.