



#winelover Against Cancer Foundation

#winelover Against Cancer is an international movement for awareness and fundraising, which is poised to grow from a grassroots initiative into a more formalised campaign, propelled by the #winelover community.

#winelover is an international community comprised of wine professionals, wine writers, wine bloggers, and passionate consumers. Founded by Luiz Alberto in 2012, in less than five years, this group has grown to include more than 20,000 members from around the world. The group connects both online and in person to responsibly discuss and taste wine, visit wine regions, attend wine-related events, conferences, etc. (See winelover.co).

Campaign Background

In 2015, #winelover community founder Luiz Alberto recognised that as a community, #winelover-s were continually impacted by the number of wine professionals, friends, and family members, who had experienced some form of cancer. It's very personal but, at the same time, universal.

With this realisation, and after learning that one of the #winelover community members was fighting her own battle with cancer, Luiz established the #winelover Against Cancer Foundation to start raising breast cancer awareness.

So far, T-shirts sporting the #winelover hashtag and #winelover-s against cancer logo have been sold. Also, the efforts by core members of the community to raise awareness on social media have also been supported by initiatives to educate the entire #winelover community, promoting early detection and prevention by reducing other risk factors and by encouraging moderation in the consumption of alcohol.

Promotion of early detection and prevention has been done primarily through sharing the opinions of Master of Wine and medical doctor Patrick Farrell, MD, MW.

Patrick comments,

“Wine is a wonderful beverage that’s delicious, brings people together and can promote overall health. That said, it’s important to remember that wine is best enjoyed responsibly, in moderation. Also, fellow #winelover-s please note that while wine consumption can be a risk factor for some cancers, especially breast cancer, it is a relatively minor one when compared to excess weight, inactivity, smoking and family history. We encourage our fellow #winelover-s to reduce their risk factors while drinking moderately and enjoying maximally.”



The #winelover community responded vigorously to the awareness-raising and fundraising initiatives, through the sale of hundreds of T-shirts and the distribution of badges and stickers. The daily proliferation on social media, of hundreds of pictures of #winelover members wearing the t-shirts, makes it a prominent campaign and important stage to raise awareness over early detection, beyond this community.

It is estimated that the #winelover Against Cancer efforts have reached tens of thousands of people worldwide, and the campaign continues to grow.

Future Developments

At the inaugural #winelover symposium in September 2016, there was a strong indication from the delegates that this was the time to move this initiative forward and to identify a clear direction for the #winelover Against Cancer Foundation and related fundraising efforts.

It is important to highlight that #winelover community members will be encouraged but not required to be involved in the fundraising programs.

Some members of the #winelover community have been affected by cancer, and while there are many causes and charitable organisations the #winelover community could support, the fundraising committee feels it is important to initially focus efforts toward programming that will be most relevant and of benefit to its community. So going forward, the approach will broaden, but the focus will be directed to four particular matters.

1. Raising Awareness

This initiative to continue through merchandising and spreading the important messages of health around types of cancer where early detection and action is key to survival rates. The #winelover Against Cancer Foundation would seek to:

- a. Ensure better communication of research around wine and health and on key early detection signs;
- b. Put the merchandising store on a more formal footing – find a company that would take care of distribution, and seek further sponsorship partnerships.

2. #winelover Against Cancer Support Group

Going through cancer treatment can be isolating and debilitating. When cancer patients participate in positive activities, it is known to promote a sense of wellbeing and raise morale. The foundation would aim to offer emotional and financial support to members going through cancer treatment by:

- a. Providing funding for #winelover-s (or their caregivers) to enable them to take part in #winelover hangouts or events, have the opportunity to visit a new wine region, meet new wine producers, or take part in wine tastings
- b. Arranging wine visits or events close to where #winelover cancer patients live so that they could meet up with other #winelover-s



3. Supporting the Bavarian Stem Cell Initiative

On a daily basis, somebody in the world receives the shattering news that they have been diagnosed with haematological cancer. These types of cancers tend to be more frequent among young people, whose only chance of recovery is via a stem cell transplant from a suitable donor. Only one-third of patients find suitable donors within their families; the other two-thirds require an unrelated donor. The probability of finding a suitable donor outside of one's own family is between one in 20,000, and one in several million, hence the importance of identifying as many potential donors as possible.

Through Stefan Metzner, a member of the #winelover community, the #winelover Against Cancer Foundation has identified a Bavarian medical centre, AKB, which has established an international database of potential stem cell donors. The process of becoming a potential donor is simple – either through a direct collection of saliva samples or by providing information about how people can become donors in their own countries. Each country has its own guidelines for eligibility.

The #winelover Against Cancer Foundation will:

- a. Inspire, eligible members of the #winelover community, to sign up to be a potential donor
- b. Encourage those attending major wine shows (consumers and people in the wine industry) to sign up to become potential donors.

4. Focus on Breast Cancer and Prostate Cancer

Two of the most commonly diagnosed cancers worldwide are breast cancer (11.9% of all cancers) and prostate cancer (7.9%). Nearly everyone in the #winelover community has been touched in some way by either breast or prostate cancer, whether through their families, or other relationships.

The #winelover Against Cancer Foundation will give these two types of cancer a particular focus, by raising awareness about them, and promote fundraising for international research.

- a. October is the month for breast cancer awareness. The launch of the official #winelover Against Cancer Campaign took place in October 2015, in the presence of Angelika Deutsch, a wine writer from Austria who has been bravely fighting breast cancer. The Foundation will continue to focus on breast cancer during the month of October every year.
- b. During the month of November #winelover Against Cancer Foundation will mobilise a campaign to raise awareness of prostate and testicular cancers. There is an official campaign in many countries; e.g. see movember.com to learn about the American one.



How can #winelover Against Cancer Foundation raise funds?

There are several ways to broaden fundraising efforts:

- * Continue to sell merchandise, and increase the range to appeal to a wider audience – T-shirts, sports shirts, armbands, badges, bags, etc. with proceeds to the Foundation.
- * Encourage regular contributions i.e. under the slogan 'every cent matters', with donors setting aside a small sum (10 cents for example) for every bottle of wine they consume or ask wine producers to add 10 cents to the price of each bottle sold in their cellars and donate proceeds back to the Foundation.
- * Hold online wine auctions, initially every four months (February, June and November) with proceeds to the Foundation; bottles are to be donated by #winelover -s, winemakers, and wine merchants.
- * Promote personal challenges e.g. have a #winelover or a #winelover team run the Médoc Marathon.
- * Organize fundraising events e.g. #winelover gala dinners.
- * Add a small percentage to #winelover membership fees to support the administration of #winelover Against Cancer campaigns.

As a next step, a task group will be nominated to take forward the proposals identified in this paper and any future developments.

Uniting for Good

People joined the #winelover community due to a passion for wine, which they wanted to share with others. As an inspired founding member of the community, Luiz Alberto makes a final appeal:

"It is this desire for connection, and collaboration with other people - from every language, race, religion and gender - that compels members of #winelover to want to stand up and help one another, in any way they can. This willingness to step forward and help is what makes this community so unique, so join me, join us, #winelover -s, and use your passion to help others: together we will make our world a better place."