

# Congratulations, Class of 2023

Klickitat PUD congratulates the Class of 2023 on their hard work and success. We applaud each graduate and are proud of their commitment to their education.

Family is important at Klickitat PUD, so we are highlighting a few graduating seniors who are special to our utility. Their parents work for KPUD and have shared stories about them through the years.

Congratulations, Jennifer, Kali and Thea. The KPUD staff wishes you the best of luck in your future endeavors.

## Jennifer Estey

Jennifer is the daughter of one of KPUD's White Salmon staking engineers, Aaron Estey, who has been with KPUD for seven years.

Jennifer is graduating from Horizon Christian School this spring. She plans to take a gap year and travel and work with her best friend, Evita, during that time.

Jennifer was a member of the student leadership team in her school.

"I was fortunate to be selected to be the vice president," she says.

Jennifer says the highlight of high school for her was, "making lasting friendships, and making many great memories with my friends that I'll have for years to come."



## Kali Watson

Kali is the daughter of Greg Watson, water-wastewater lead operator and a 15-year employee of KPUD.

Kali is graduating from Goldendale High School



in June with honors as a member of National Honor Society and in the top 10 of the class.

Following graduation, Kali plans to pursue a post-secondary education at Spokane Community College to earn her associate degree in diagnostic medical sonography and become an ultrasound technician.

Kali has been active in both school and the community. In school, she was a two-sport athlete, and lettered in soccer and wrestling all four years of high school.

"I love to participate in community events and help at the local soup kitchen and blood drives as well as various other events," she says.

Kali recently overcame a serious ACL tear during her senior year wrestling season. She described overcoming it as being her biggest accomplishment.

"I was told I would not be able to finish the season. After multiple doctor appointments, physical therapy, X-rays and MRIs, doctors released me to finish my senior season. I went on to place fourth at state."

Since then, Kali had her knee repaired and is dedicated to the recovery process.

"I learned so much from this experience and would not have been able to do it without the support of my coaches, Chris Williams, James Barnes and Matt Smith," she says. "I would just like to thank them and this amazing community for everything."

## Thea Smith

Thea is the daughter of KPUD General Manager Jim Smith, who has been an employee for 25 years.

Thea is graduating in June from Goldendale High School and from Columbia Basin College with an



associate degree in arts and sciences. She is graduating with honors, as a member of the National Technology Student Association Honor Society, CBC's and GHS's Honor Society and the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

"I plan to attend Cal Poly to study industrial engineering," Thea says. "I am excited to compete on the Cal Poly club swim team, Formula SAE design team, and participate in a co-op program."

Throughout high school, Thea has been a Technology Student Association state officer four times, including being the state president twice. She has traveled the country and met people from around the world while serving Washington TSA's 11,000 members. While in TSA, Thea has also competed in events to learn STEM skills and explore STEM careers. Throughout her TSA years, she's been a state finalist 14 times, a state champion seven times, a national finalist seven times and a national champion twice.

Thea has been a competitive swimmer since she was 4 years old and was the club's team captain for two years. She's worked as a head lifeguard at the Goldendale pool for three years, and been a youth camp coordinator for two years. Additionally, she's worked as a dock sales deck hand on a fishing boat and has volunteered around the Goldendale community.

Thea's favorite memory from her high school career was getting to serve as a TSA state officer with her older sister during her freshman year.

"It was her senior year," Thea says. "So I was honored that both of us were elected to represent the members of WTSA at the same time, and I had an amazing time working alongside her." ■