

# Generosity Shines in Operation Warm Heart

By Beth Schroder

When Robbie Cacy, Klickitat PUD's purchasing department buyer, places an order for office supplies or other items, there is often the option to add on a free item from the vendor. Sometimes it is a mixing bowl set, a flashlight or something else. Over the course of many months, numerous items had been acquired.

KPUD staff decided the best use of these items was to put them up for auction to employees. But not just any auction: It would be a six-week event benefiting the Operation Warm Heart fund.

The weekly silent auctions were organized and managed by Engineering Support Assistant Shelby Manka and Billing Clerk Lori Fakesch. During that time, Klickitat PUD employees raised \$1,649 for Operation Warm Heart.

Since 1989, caring Klickitat PUD customers, including staff, have given generously to the Operation Warm Heart fund. Their gifts help other KPUD customers who have problems paying their power bills. "Neighbor helping neighbor" is a proud Klickitat County tradition.

"Sometimes, people who are normally able to pay their utility bills have life events happen and need a little help through the tough spots," says Customer Service Supervisor Brandy Myers. "Operation Warm Heart is funded by our customers to help their fellow neighbor."

Especially during the coronavirus pandemic, Operation Warm Heart has provided relief to those in need.

## What Is Operation Warm Heart?

Operation Warm Heart is an emergency energy assistance program funded by contributions from PUD customers.



Klickitat PUD's silent auction fundraiser for Operation Warm Heart was spearheaded by Engineering Support Assistant Shelby Manka, left, and Billing Clerk Lori Fakesch, with auction items gathered by Buyer Robbie Cacy, right. PHOTO BY BETH SCHRODER

During the past five years, the program has given more than \$100,000 to help hundreds of families in financial crisis, often because of a health emergency, change in employment or other extenuating issue.

## Who Gets Help?

All of the funds raised by Operation Warm Heart stay in Klickitat County to help local families experiencing a temporary financial hardship.

KPUD takes applications and works with the Goldendale Ministerial Association to screen applicants for eligibility.

## How Can I Contribute?

You can be part of Operation Warm Heart with a tax-deductible contribution of any amount. There are three easy ways to give:

- Have a small amount added to your monthly KPUD bill. Most people give just \$1 or \$2 a month.
- Contribute any amount. All gifts are welcome and can be made at any time.
- Place your bill on Operation Round Up, which rounds up utility bills to the nearest dollar and places the difference into the Operation Warm Heart fund to help needy families.

No matter which option you choose, your gift is tax deductible and a great way to show your care. ■

To participate, please contact KPUD customer service representatives at 800-548-8357, 509-773-5891 or 509-493-2255.