

# KeizerCommunity

KEIZERTIMES.COM

## Morris recognized as DYW's most spirited

BY MATT RAWLINGS  
*Of the Keizertimes*

Even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Leilani Morris has maintained an infectious smile and positive attitude.

When she competed in the Distinguished Young Women (DYW) of Oregon competition, it was easy for others to take notice.

After being one of the three Keizer participants to qualify for state, Morris was named the 2021 spirit award winner at the DYW state competition at First Baptist Church in Salem on Friday, Aug. 7.

"It was an incredible experience at the state competition. It was so fun to meet such talented and wonderful girls," Morris said. "It was such an honor to win the spirit award. All of the girls had the potential to win it."

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— Leilani Morris

Morris was granted \$500 in scholarship money for winning the spirit award, to go along with the \$1,000 scholarship she was awarded for qualifying for the state competition — McNary High School students Nicole Russell and Esther Hudkins were the two other Keizer participants.

"Though all the participants demonstrated strong



Morris

commitment to the program in this crazy year, Leilani strongly demonstrated responsibility, hard work, independence and self-reliance in preparation for the state program which had to occur virtually. As well, her genuine spirit, caring of others, and exuberance was evident in everything she did," said Silverna Scott, the

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production chairperson for the state program.

Morris was encouraged to participate in DYW by some of her church friends, along with several adults in her life that have competed in DYW programs in the past — DYW was formerly known as the Junior Miss program.

"I knew a few people who did the competition last year and it just looked like it would be a great opportunity to boost my confidence and put myself out there," Morris said.

Due to COVID-19, the DYW state program had to

look drastically different in order to be done safely.

Days before the ceremony, participants recorded their talents, self-expressions and fitness routines to present to the judges. The young women also were interviewed by the judges over Zoom — which is the most valuable aspect of the competition.

When award day arrived, only family members could be attendance and all participants were required to wear masks and follow social distancing protocols.

"It was unfortunate that we couldn't have a regular competition experience," Morris said.

For her talent, Morris performed a Tahitian dance to pay homage to her culture — Morris currently dances with a group called "Paradise of Samoa."

"I have been dancing for a really long time and it has helped me really get in touch with my culture," Morris said. "It really has become a passion of mine."

Along with being an avid dancer, Morris is passionate about serving her school and community.

Morris is a part of a two-year youth leadership program with the Salem Chamber of Commerce, which introduces students to the realities, opportunities and challenges facing the region. She is also involved with leadership at McNary as the student public relations officer for the school.

During the holidays, Morris volunteers her time at *Toys for Tots*, helping deliver gifts for children in need.

"I love being able to serve and give back," Morris said.

Morris will be a senior at McNary this fall. With a GPA of over 4.0, Morris wants to attend college at either Stanford University or Linfield University and aspires to one day be an anesthesiologist or an OBGYN.



Morris (left) pictured with McNary classmates Nicole Russell (center) and Esther Hudkins, who both also qualified for the DYW state competition.

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## WorshipDirectory

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**KEIZER COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
380 Churchdale Ave N (1 block West of Dutch Bros)  
503-393-0222 • [KeizerCommunityChurch.com](http://KeizerCommunityChurch.com)

**SUNDAY:**  
9:30 am Sunday School (all ages)  
11:00 am Worship Service

**WEDNESDAY:**  
6:30 pm Awana; Youth Group; Adults

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**PEOPLESCHURCH**  
4500 LANCASTER DR NE | SALEM  
503.304.4000 • [www.peopleschurch.com](http://www.peopleschurch.com)

**SAINT EDWARD Catholic Church**  
393-5323  
5303 River Rd. N., Keizer  
Father Gary L. Zerr, Pastor  
Saturday Vigil Liturgy: 5:30 p.m.  
Sundays: 8:15 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.  
La Misa en Español: 12:30 p.m.

**KEIZER CLEAR LAKE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
a member of Open Door Churches of Salem-Keizer  
**REV. ALYSSA BAKER, Lead Pastor**  
Services are Sunday at 10 am (Nursery & Sunday School for Children)  
7920 Wheatland Rd N • 503-393-2402 • [www.kclumc.org](http://www.kclumc.org)

**Faith Lutheran Church, ELCA**  
4505 River Road N, Keizer • 503-393-4507  
[www.FLCKeizer.org](http://www.FLCKeizer.org)

**Pastor Linda Matz Easterling**  
Sunday School - 9:00 am  
Worship Service - 10:00 am

**Keizer Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**  
6945 Wheatland Rd. NE 393-6843  
[www.KeizerChristian.org](http://www.KeizerChristian.org)

Worship and Children's Church • 10:00 a.m.  
Office Hours 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Mon. - Fri.

**COUNTRYSIDE Christian Church**  
9:30 am & 11:00 am Sunday Worship Services  
[countrysidechristianchurch.org](http://countrysidechristianchurch.org)  
Corner of Lockhaven and McLeod, KEIZER • (503) 540-1989

**John Knox Presbyterian Church**  
452 Cummings Lane North • 393-0404

Worship - 10:30 a.m.  
Education Hour - 9:15 a.m.  
Nursery Care Available  
[www.JohnKnoxPresKeizer.org](http://www.JohnKnoxPresKeizer.org)