



Feel-Good  
STORY

Saluting the people that make  
us proud of our community

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# These women are distinguished



Women of Keizer comes with more honors than the scholarships and opportunities at the state and possibly national levels. While both Jarnagin and Sponable look forward to competing and learning at state, one thing stands out to them.

“Going in the Iris Parade, I can’t wait for that,” Sponable said. “I’ve always dreamed of being in the Iris Parade just like the previous Distinguished Young Women.”

Jarnagin sees the title as an opportunity to be a role model and continue helping out with the program next year, inspiring future classes as she was by the class of 2020.

“I was just in complete awe because they were strong and independent women, but they also had their sense of femininity with them,” Jarnagin said. “I want to be that person on that float. I want to be that inspirational person that little kids look up to.”

Two former Distinguished Young Women of Keizer received unexpected recognition. 2022 representatives Ellie Auvinen and Sydney Smith were part of the night’s proceedings. The evening began with Auvinen singing the national anthem accompanied by Smith on the piano.

Later, both Auvinen and Smith

By JOSHUA MANES  
Of the Keizertimes

The Distinguished Young Women of Keizer were back on stage at McNary High School Saturday, April 9, naming Kiele Jarnagin and Anna Sponable as the 2023 representatives.

Jarnagin nearly swept the awards, receiving \$250 scholarships from five of the six categories. She won the spirit, self-expression, fitness and scholastics categories outright. Her monologue from Oscar Wilde’s *An Ideal Husband* tied for the talent award with Lilly Purkey, who

sang *Top of My School* by Katherine Lynn-Rose. Both Jarnagin and Purkey received \$250 scholarships.

“The first time I heard my name I was like ‘Oh my gosh, I actually won something, this is crazy,’” Jarnagin said. “When they kept calling my name, oh no, this is feeling a little too real right now. Every single emotion came at me all at once. I’m surprised I wasn’t crying.”

The sixth category, interview, was awarded to the first alternate McKenna Eppley.

Sponable’s emotional shock at being named a Distinguished Young Woman

of Keizer was apparent when her name was called.

“I was just expecting to sit there and say ‘Yay,’ but now I’m here and can’t wait to represent Keizer,” Sponable said. “I was kind of hoping to win, but winning itself, wow, I wasn’t expecting it.”

On top of the \$1,000 scholarships they each received, Jarnagin and Sponable will now advance to the state competition for a chance at additional scholarship money and to move on to the national program in Mobile, Alabama in June.

Being named the Distinguished Young

