

# Neighbors Helping Neighbors: Operation Warm Heart

Heating a home can be expensive during the chilly winter months, making it a significant burden for households attempting to make ends meet each month. Caring customers of Klickitat PUD have donated to the Operation Warm Heart fund since 1989 to help those struggling to pay their bills.

This neighbors-helping-neighbors program is a cherished tradition within the utility. During the past few years, many Klickitat PUD employees have generously donated safety and tenure points and held internal fundraising efforts to support the program and ensure funds remain available.

## What is Operation Warm Heart?

Operation Warm Heart is an emergency energy relief program funded by KPUD customer donations. During the past three years, more than \$34,000 was disbursed to help families within the county who struggle to keep their power on. During this time, the program has helped 75 customers avoid service disconnection. The reasons help is needed vary but are often due to a medical emergency, a change in employment or other unavoidable circumstances.

## Who qualifies for help?

Local KPUD customers going through short-term financial challenges qualify for funds. There are no income requirements tied to this assistance program. To determine eligibility, KPUD accepts applications and coordinates with the Goldendale Ministerial Association for application approval. KPUD is grateful for the partnership with GMA and its support and understanding of the program.

## What makes Operation Warm Heart special?

This program has no administration fees, and money donated stays entirely within Klickitat County, meaning 100% of donations go to customers in need. This one-time assistance program often requires

“Over the 27 years I have worked at Klickitat PUD, I have seen this program benefit numerous families. When life events occur, even those who are typically able to pay their power bills may need a little assistance to get through rough patches.”

—BILLING CLERK LORI FAKESCH

customers to match the payment to receive benefits, supporting it as a hand-up versus a handout.

## Giving is as easy as 1, 2, 3:

1. Choose to add a donation to your monthly KPUD bill. The average is \$1 to \$2 per month.
2. Enroll in Round Up, which rounds your PUD bill to the nearest dollar and donates

that extra amount each month.

3. At your convenience, add a lump sum that fits your budget.

Log in to SmartHub to enroll in Round Up or add a monthly donation, or call 509-773-5891 or 509-493-2255. If you need help, please contact customer service for an OWH application. ■

The graphic features the 'OPERATION WARM HEART' logo with two figures holding a heart, the 'LEND A HAND' slogan with a hand emoji, and the 'WARM A HEART' slogan with a red heart emoji. It also includes the 'smart hub' logo and the 'KLICKITAT PUD' logo with a red lightning bolt. At the bottom, it lists 'Goldendale White Salmon', the motto 'Honesty | Accountability | Customer Focused', and contact information: '509.773.5891 | KlickitatPUD.com | 509.493.2255'. The central text reads 'Enroll to round your bill up with smart hub'.