



**KRISTIN
SMART**
SCHOLARSHIP

LOCAL RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED FOR THE 2022-23 KRISTIN SMART SCHOLARSHIPS

STOCKTON, Calif. (May 25, 2023) - The recipients of the Kristin Smart Scholarship Fund for the Class of 2023 have been announced. Each year, four exceptional young female students from both San Joaquin and San Luis Obispo Counties are selected to receive monetary awards to financially assist their quest for a college education. To qualify for consideration, recipients ideally possess an interest in international relations; architecture; or are pursuing a degree in law enforcement or forensic science.

Kristin Smart was a young, enthusiastic 19-year-old from Stockton who was a freshman at Cal-Poly, San Luis Obispo studying architecture, when she disappeared in 1996 during Memorial Day weekend. She possessed a great love for travel and exploring new cultures. Now in its fifth year, the Kristin Smart Scholarship Fund has awarded \$60,000 in scholarships to 20 recipients. The scholarship was created to honor her life.

“The *Kristin Smart Scholarship* is our way to celebrate and remember Kristin’s life, hopes, dreams, and ambitions - by financially helping other young women realize theirs,” said Kristin’s mother, Denise Smart. She added, “These four recipients represent an outstanding group of young women who applied this year, and they truly share Kristin’s passions and career aspirations.”

The Class of 2023 recipients are:

San Joaquin County

Isabella Githere-Hurtado, Tracy High School

Isabella has held many school leadership roles. She has been a flag leader for the Tracy High School Marching Band, a member of the school orchestra, and a member of her high school volleyball and soccer teams. She is an active and enthusiastic volunteer for Boys and Girls Club Inclusion program working to help students with disabilities find their voices. Isabella is a recipient of the Rotary Club Public Speaker Award on the importance of community involvement. Isabella hopes to pursue a law degree with focus on immigration and criminal law with the goal to return to her community. She wants to help those who are fighting for the right to live in America as well as work with her community to find a solution for the homeless. She is described as a person who loves to invest in people and is dedicated to academic excellence.

Madison McGuire, Sierra High School

Madison has had multiple leadership roles at her school including student body president and as a member of the Sierra High varsity volleyball, basketball, and track teams. She has received many academic awards and continues to work and volunteer in her community. She hopes to get a social work degree with a focus on sexual abuse and work as a victim's witness advocate to help survivors of violence. Her school and community passion are to create environments where everyone feels safe and accepted for who they are. She considers Kristin's story an example of strength and resilience under unimaginable circumstances, and it is something she will always remember. She is described as intelligent, hardworking and someone who leads with kindness and compassion.

San Luis Obispo County

Austria Holland, Nipomo High School

Austria is an active leader at both her school and in her community. An athletic and academic scholar, captain of her volleyball and wrestling teams, and twice a CIF champion for wrestling and track and field. In addition, Austria is a National Honor Society President, and Teen of the Month for both the California Scholastic Federation and San Luis Obispo County. She is active in the BE Strong and the #988 You MATTER movement with the goal of addressing student mental health concerns and helping to prevent teen suicide. Austria plans to study law in the hopes that she will one day be able to make a difference and bring a female perspective to the justice system. She is described as a leader you want on your team, someone who is a consensus builder who values the voices of her peers.

Natalie Niznik, San Luis Obispo High School

Natalie has been active in multiple school clubs, Future Farmers of America, Key Club, Animal Science, and the Environmental Club and as a volunteer in her community. Natalie will be the first in her family to graduate from college. She completed high school a semester early and plans to enroll this summer at Cuesta College. Natalie volunteers with the SLO Senior Nutrition program, the Homeless Overflow (CAPSLO) and Hospitalized Kids organizations. She plans to major in psychology as a career path to becoming a Forensic Psychologist. She hopes that Kristin's voice will be an example on how to bring justice to other victims. She is described as hard working, compassionate, and inquisitive with an intrinsic motivation to succeed.

To learn more about the Kristin Smart Scholarship or to support the careers and college goals of young women in San Joaquin and San Luis Obispo Counties through the scholarship program, visit www.kristinsmart.org.

