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What Does Rose City Reunion Mean to You?

Wait! Stop! Do you hear that? It's the sounds and excitement of the community getting ready for a Rose City Reunion. The bands are polishing their brass, the designers are busy in their studios planning the floats, children are cleaning up their bikes getting ready to decorate them for the Junior Parade, and the call is out for the One More Time Around Again band to assemble (my grandmother's personal favorite!). After so long of not being able to see each other, people can't contain their excitement.

It's been way too long since we have been able to gather as a community. But what I love about Portland is our ability to adjust to any circumstance. For over 100 years, the coming of the spring season started to get everyone excited for the Rose Festival. Two years ago, the rug was pulled from under us. The amazing thing about Portland is our pioneer spirit. We weren't going to let this tradition die. We pared down, we masked up, we social distanced, and when necessary, we went virtual. We never gave up. Shout out to the amazing person who thought of the PORCH PARADE. Brilliant!

That same can-do attitude was expressed with the students in our schools. We tried to keep alive the things that meant something to us. We found ways to help others. For instance, at my school through Key Club we collected items for families during the holidays and raised money for charities through various projects. One of the most rewarding projects for me personally was becoming involved with PDX Concierge. Through this program, we shop for and deliver groceries and necessities to the elderly and immunocompromised people. This is one of my favorite service events that I've been doing for the last two years. I have grown to love this organization and have developed relationships with these wonderful people, mostly elderly, that now ask me personally to do their shopping for them because I am someone they can trust.

We are social, and that has been the hardest part for us. We missed homecoming, proms and just getting together. But, again, our ingenuity and never-give-up attitude jumped into action, and we had 'drive by' birthdays! My 16th (and others just like me) stood outside our homes and waved and laughed while all our friends and family drove by yelling "Happy Birthday" and

honking their horns! My family from the west side came and set up chairs on our sidewalk, sang happy birthday, ate cake, and played games. It was one of my most memorable birthdays so far!

And so, Portland, you have sacrificed enough. It's your time to shine bright once again! As you break out of your cocoon and become the beautiful butterfly we have loved for so long, it's time for our 2022 official rose, Rosy Reunion to bloom! Now - let's get this party started!