



Ida B. Wells High School

Audriana Ethridge

How Are You Focusing on Fun in 2023?

When I think about this current period of my life, being a senior about to graduate, fun is definitely not the first word that comes to mind. I think about all of the unknowns- which are extremely stressful. This isn't an individual experience either. There are countless seniors, like me, who don't know what state they are living in or what major they'll be studying. Instead I am choosing to focus on what I do know is happening and my biggest hopes for this year.

I have lived in Portland my whole life, but I usually feel like I don't know my hometown super well. Meaning a fear of mine would be to leave Portland feeling like I had missed out on the amazing adventures it has to offer, not knowing if I would come back. I want to take this year to truly learn about my hometown. I want to go on hikes and see the incredible nature. I want to discover new amazing restaurants and explore local shops and fairs. I want to do all of these things, but these memories would be much more meaningful with the people I love.

After all I have created amazing connections here and want to celebrate and honor them. All of my friends and family live in Portland and I want to spend my time left creating memories that will last a life. Especially as I'm saying goodbye and moving on to new chapters in my life. Where I will hopefully find an equally spectacular community to lift me up.

The thing I am most excited for is all of the vast opportunities that will be provided to me as someone entering college. As cliché as this sounds, I love learning and accumulating knowledge. Although, I don't view this as just sitting in class or reading textbooks. As I have often found that my most educational lessons have stemmed from real world experiences. I love putting myself in situations where I am encouraged to communicate with people I normally would not. Whether this be through working at local art fairs, dancing at Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, or volunteering at the homeless shelter, I feel like these interactions are where I have learned the most and what I value the highest. One of my biggest goals entering college is to expand upon the experiences and further this form of education.

I have a ton of plans and items on my to-do list, so I think it's also really important to center myself and my mental health this year. The best way to prioritize fun in 2023 is to prioritize myself and listen to what I need. Which won't change no matter how many fun adventures I go on or how much I learn. I will always need the space to recharge after a long day. Sometimes all I want to do is to sleep in and stay home watching Grey's Anatomy or any other debatably bad tv show. To quote Winnie the Pooh "Doing nothing often leads to the very best of something". So I am embracing the uncertainty and spontaneity, which is admittedly extremely difficult for me. I am having fun by acknowledging all of the fun things I want to do and accomplish, but giving myself the time and space for my mental health. Allowing for, hopefully, the best type of personal growth and year.