

**Jenny Duan – Metro West - Jesuit High School**

**What does Rose City Reunion Mean to You?**

To me, the 2022 Rose Festival theme, Rose City Reunion, is a celebration of resilience. It's a reminder that despite the hardships we have faced this year - the pandemic, unrest, fear, and many more - we can and will overcome.

I resonate deeply with the theme. It exemplifies the mission of the Rose Festival, to honor diversity and to celebrate tradition and unity. I am excited to be a candidate this year because I connect personally with the theme. As a person who spends a lot of time in Portland, especially downtown Portland, I recognize the need for change and celebration. I am a Youth Outreach Board leader at Rose Haven, a volunteer at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, and am frequently involved with the Youth-Lens program at the Oregon Chinese Coalition, where I create documentary-style films sharing the experiences of Chinese-Americans in Oregon. To me, diversity is important because it brings us together. It brings joy. My experiences have reinforced my desire to stay involved with the Portland community and to share my love for advocacy with others as well.

The Rose Festival is a place where people from all across the city and state come together. It's a powerful symbol of community strength and our ability to overcome. One of my favorite events each year is the Starlight Parade, which is both a physical and metaphorical symbol that light will overcome the darkness. During each Rose Festival event, I am always amazed at how people from drastically different backgrounds can come together in celebration. I think this is the spirit of the Rose Festival, to welcome all, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, and many more factors. In a time where so much division is highlighted through the news and social media, I think that human connection is ever the more important. I think the Rose Festival is beautiful and hopeful, and that the theme this year represents the spirit of our community this year.

I think the Rose Festival is for everyone. As a candidate for the Rose Festival Court, I want to use my identity and experiences to share these feelings of joy and dedication to advocacy with others. I hope to inspire viewers and participants to use their interests to empower their

communities as well. I want to show other people that they belong at the Rose Festival, and that they matter. The theme “Rose City Reunion” is one of hope. It symbolizes Portland’s strength, beauty, and tradition. It emphasizes the power in our communities, in each one of us, showing us that we, too, can make a difference.