

Stella Jackson - Leodis V. McDaniel

What Does Rose City Reunion Mean to You?

To me, the Rose City Reunion means the beginning of things coming back to “normal” - whatever that new normal may be. I personally believe it means hope and personally it means community. To me, community means helping those in need, having someone to rely on, and engaging in my society and with my peers. For instance, writing letters to teachers or staff during this horrible and unprecedented pandemic. Based on my experience with my club, Passion Impact, I know that letter-writing events greatly impact and uplift people, especially in these dark and uncertain times. Or, packing gift-baskets for the frontline workers who have been risking their lives for us day in and day out. I saw this firsthand through my internship with Passion Impact, as well. Along with these two events, the in-person activities and events of this fantastic festival will bring the Rose City back together once again, for everyone to enjoy. The world needs these bright, exciting events again after being without them for such a dreadfully long time.

I actually remember going to the Portland Rose Festival when I was about 10 years old and seeing the bands perform. Those incredible musicians inspired me to join my own school’s band. I remember going on some rides and watching the floats pass me by as well. It’s a memory that has stuck with me all these years and whenever I’m unhappy, I think back to it and the cheer that it brought me.

The Portland Rose Festival brings this joy and fantastic energy to whomever attends. It brings together our community in such a remarkable way that other events have a difficult time replicating. The vigor surrounding this festival is Portland’s pride, and to me, it just means pure delight. It means being surrounded, socially distanced of course, by friends, families, and neighbors. It brings people to our city from all over the country, and from all over the world. They come to see Portland and join in on the festivities, as well as to watch the parades that highlight the different cultures and diversity in our beautiful city and promote the volunteerism that our residents actively engage in.

After about two years of living in fear of this global crisis, we’re finally starting to get back into our lives - even if it’s not completely over with just yet. With live music, fireworks,

and carnival rides - the Rose City Reunion is just a stepping stone in this process. A stepping stone that will bring Portland together, it will show people that it's okay and it will bring people joy and laughter. It will show that we can make it together. That, even with a pandemic, we can still have fun, make friends, and engage with our community, which I think some people may have unfortunately forgotten.