



Parkrose High School

Jolynn Ta

How Are You Focusing on Fun in 2023?

I've always considered myself a resilient person. When life throws me a curveball, I never give up and am always working through it with a strong and positive attitude. Portland has also stayed resilient through curveballs. For instance, during the Covid-19 Pandemic when the whole world shut down. During the lockdown, a lot of tough issues were brought to light. The George Floyd murder sparked a period of protesting for Black Lives Matter that put Downtown Portland on National news. During the height of the Pandemic, we had to stay on our screens to feel connected, and every day seemed like there was always something bad on the news. This was when Asian hate crimes gained national attention; Asian businesses were robbed and innocent people were murdered - even in our very own city.

All this said, it feels surreal to look up, and realize that these events took place almost 3 years ago. As a community, we've been through a lot, but we've stayed resilient, we've become better people, we don't sweep issues under the rug, we stand tall when there are injustices. We can take the lessons we learned from these last 3 years - which will no doubt be in history books one day, and we can have some sense of normalcy in our lives again.

The theme this year is How will you focus on fun? Since my time at Parkrose High School was cut short by one and a half years, it has taught me to appreciate time with other people. Focusing on fun, to me, means being present and enjoying these next few months with my community - before walking across that stage and receiving a diploma. Focusing on fun means cherishing the bonds formed between me, my classmates, and my teachers. Focusing on fun means showing up for my community; supporting student-athletes by going to games, supporting the musicians at band and choir performances, going to see Cinderella the spring play, going to the Poetry Slam, and finally, wrapping this year up by celebrating together at Prom. Most of these seem like small events, but they are a lot of fun, I look forward to them very much.

As a 2023 Rose Festival Candidate, I would be proud to represent Parkrose High School, because of how strong our community is, how resilient we are, and lastly, how fun we are.

Thank you.