

The Rose Festival is something that embodies the most wonderful things of Portland, especially socially. As the world reopens, not only do we have something to look forward to attending, we have something to represent our hope and the things that we have lost in the past year. We can use this historical chain of events to honor the lives that have been lost, the time that we can't get back, the communities that have been affected, and so much more. The Festival can take its influence and history and give people something to connect with easily. They will get to look forward to sitting with friends next to the Starlight Parade, cheering on their family members in the run, and of course the Rose Court is an excellent opportunity to show student perseverance through all the struggles they have endured educationally.

Through completely different conditions for learning and growing and a lack of the classic opportunities that high school students are supposed to have, there have been hardships to endure and I believe it's important to highlight the good that might have also occurred. This will help people not just have longing to be free from quarantine but appreciation for what has come out of it. I am especially excited for the opportunity to possibly participate in this group where I truly believe some amazing young women can help lead the world safely back into comfort and community, while learning how to be leaders themselves.

There has been an incredible amount of loss this year. Personally it began with things like the Rose Festival no longer being available, like I might have been used to. On top of that, I was suddenly alone. I didn't have the safety nets that I had previously, and I was struggling with that reality. I felt that I, and the rest of the world could connect, at least a little bit closer, with people who had been struggling like this all along; People who never had a safety net, who always have endured a lack of opportunities, and who have always had to worry, not look forward to what tomorrow will bring. I am enthusiastic to see how the Rose Festival creates events that will coax people back out into the world safely and begin to heal the community through the arts and social events. I want to see the Rose Festival use its resources to make happiness and community something available to everyone, and we can all emerge from the year together.