

Roserina Chipen – Benson

Inspiring. Tradition. Evolving. How do these three words describe the Rose Festival?

Inspiring, tradition, and evolving, these words have created significance to the Rose festival. The Rose festival started out as a small event, almost 100 years ago, but it now has evolved into a festival that unites all people of Portland.

Similar to the evolution of the Rose Festival, my Chuukese traditions that were made long ago have also evolved and been inspirational.

In my island we have big traditions of celebrating holidays to small ones of just following cultural customs. Christmas and Easter has probably been the two biggest holidays that we celebrate, and there has always been, important preachings, songs and food, but back then holidays were still important but simply celebrated.

Now I believe that our traditional celebration has evolved, by having other Chuukese churches from other states join us with songs, dances, sermons, lots of delicious food and sports tournaments to get everyone moving. Our traditions also inspire many people to become better versions of themselves and to try their best to get out of their comfort zones and find their purpose.

My traditions and the Portland traditions have helped me get closer to finding my purpose and pursue my goals.

But surprisingly, being born and raised in Portland, I first heard of the Rose festival my freshman year when I attended the Rose princess speech assembly, it was there that I realized how amazing this festival was and how inspired I was to one day try something new, like running for Princess, because I tend to let my fears and worries, get the best of me, and block me from getting a step closer to growing.

I am happy to say that this festival and its events had inspired me my freshman year because here I am, speaking in front of you all, out of my comfort zone, representing my island Chuuk, Micronesia, doing something that I can look back on and thank God for guiding me.

Many times in life, it can take an inspirational event and faith to evolve into the person you want to be.

These three words, inspiring, tradition and evolving are the most important words that you can use to describe this festival, because It also took the people of the early 20th century to be inspired and driven to make the city of Portland known and create a festival.

It was their inspiration that has lead to the cities tradition to evolve, by including the multi cultures of the Portland people and provide career opportunities for its young women, such as myself, through its Rose Princess scholarship.

Representing Benson as a Rose Festival Princess would make my time at Benson complete. I came to Benson a shy and timid girl and I'm leaving as the bold Micronesian woman you see before you today; ready to put us on the map.