

Carmella Thomas – Grant

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

When I think of the words inspiring, tradition, and evolving, one thing comes to mind immediately for me. Family. Over time as my family grows and welcomes new faces, it evolves into something greater than it was before. Traditions get passed down from grandparents and their parents before them, shaping me into who I am today. My family inspires me to try my hardest and go after what I want no matter the circumstances. They push me to succeed and go beyond the limits they created for themselves and to never give up. With the help of my family I am able to work towards a greater me and pass what I have learned onto others as well. Over the years I have come across all sorts of different people who have become like family to me. Self Enhancement Inc., a program I am apart of, has been my youth family well throughout high school. Oregon Association of Student Councils has been my leader family, and has helped guide me to better support my school community. Grant Dance collective has also been a family to me. Acting as my dance family, that group of people have been encouraging and supportive of every decision I make. So because inspiring, tradition, and evolving means family to me, how I view the Rose festival as well. Knowing a few former princesses myself, I can definitely say the Rose Festival has been some kind of family to them all. The Rose Festival supports young women and guides them to be their better self just as my intermediate family does for me. This program from the outside is life changing and it transforms everyone involved. It allows you to develop connections and become closer as a sisterhood, along with so many different aspects. The rose festival has inspired me to represent my community and go above and beyond to be a leader to those around me. As a huge portland tradition, the rose festival is well anticipated throughout the metro area and will always be apart of portland. It evolves in many ways since it first started in 1930, and continues to change so it can support and be a well loved resource to all. The rose festival sounds like an exciting experience this will change my life for the better, and I can't wait to be apart of this new family.