

The Portland Rose festival has been a staple tradition of Portland for 114 years. 114 years of connecting our community, helping young women have bright futures and helping Portlanders grow into a tradition of community building that connects all socioeconomic and racial backgrounds. In tradition there is comfort to be offered to a COVID-weary community. During these difficult times it will be uplifting for the communities of Oregon to see young women be highlighted for the Portland Rose Festival (as they have for the past 114 years).

Portland has gone through a lot this year and it will take a long time to get back economically to where we were. But one thing for sure is that our community is one that will do anything to help one another. We have businesses such as Portland Gear who, just this year, released the Sunshine Studio collaboration in remembrance of a local high schooler. Not many brands as big as this would connect to their communities in this way but as Portlanders we have this unique ability to do just that. The chosen rose for the 2021 Rose Festival is the “Burst of Hope” rose which coincides exactly with what our world needs this year.

Portland attracted the name Rose City when there was the 1905 Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition where roses were lined upon the streets of Portland. Not long after rose bushes were planted in what is now Washington Park to attract visitors to the city and establish Portland as the true Rose City. The woman that inspired the Portland Rose Festival, Georgianna Pittock created the Portland Rose Society where she would hold fundraisers in her rose garden. This led the mayor of Portland to create the first Rose festival in 1907 where the Pittocks donated roses from their garden for the floats.

Portland has many names for itself such as the official slogan of “The City that Works.” Yet, we are so much more than that. We are the city that is weird, the Rip city that celebrates our wins, the Stumptown working on improving our environment, and even Portlandia being named after the copper statue downtown which depicts the Queen of Commerce celebrating local goods from Oregon.

Portland is a city that is stronger together, and with the Rose Festival happening again this year, it will bring hope to our communities by creating a sense of normalcy.