

Rose Festival princess delights in celebrating achievement, culture

By Maileen Hamto
The Asian Reporter

Stephanie Vo, David Douglas High School's 2016 Rose Festival princess, won't hesitate to let you know that she loves Disneyland. In fact, she highlighted this bit of personal trivia in her judged pageant speech that secured the win.

Throughout her academic life, a primary motivation for Vo to bring home all As is a family vacation to Disneyland. "My mom knew this little kingdom renowned to be 'the happiest place on earth' and a little girl who desperately wants to go every year. By looking forward to Disneyland, I had something to remind me to pull through even when finals were sneaking in and all I wanted was a bag of chips and a TV remote control," she said.

And Vo has demonstrated that she is motivated to achieve more than straight As. At David Douglas, she served on student council during her freshman, sophomore, and senior years. "This community has given me the same love and support my family has, so I truly do recognize my peers and teachers as my second family and the school, my second home."

Giving back to the David Douglas community is important for Vo, who is a lifelong resident of increasingly diverse East Portland. She sees David Douglas as "a small-scale representation of East Portland," in terms of the growing population of residents of color from various ethnic backgrounds.

"When we [students] look at each other, we acknowledge that behind every person is a past, a story that could likely involve a hard transition from another country or another struggle of some sort. While we are all different, we are all the same," she said.

She lauds her school's commitment to honoring and valuing difference. "I'm so proud of my school's strong advocacy toward anti-bullying, supporting a community that does not tear each other down but brings each other up," she said.

Strong ties to her own culture surely helped Vo develop a sense of awareness, humility, and respect for peers who come from various backgrounds and lived experiences. She speaks fondly of being Vietnamese American and takes pride in being among the first generation in her family to be born and raised in Portland.

"In my house, my mom makes sure we're exposed to a daily dose of our Vietnamese roots whenever possible. She



Photo courtesy of the Portland Rose Festival Foundation



Photo courtesy of the Vo family

COMMUNITY & CULTURE. Stephanie Vo (left photo) is seen with her family on a trip to Disneyland (right photo, L-R) — Stephanie, Mai, Heidi, Steven, and Sonya. Vo is representing David Douglas High School as her school's 2016 Rose Festival princess. The Portland Rose Festival's Queen's Coronation takes place Saturday, June 11 at Portland's Veterans Memorial Coliseum.

won't even respond back to me if I speak English to her. That only strengthens my Vietnamese tongue," she said.

She also delights in the Asian culture's emphasis on celebrating accomplishments. In line with the Disneyland family trips to reward good grades, her entire family gathered to celebrate her crowning as a Rose Festival princess in the best possible way: a feast.

"My family took me out to eat at the oh-so-trending Fujiyama Sushi Bar & Grill, which is also my uncle's restaurant!" she said. "I devoured copious amounts of my favorite: the vegetable roll."

Surrounded by family and community, Vo is proud to be well-versed in Vietnamese music and movies, as well as traditional food, customs, beliefs, and celebrations.

"In Vietnamese culture, we respect our elders, eat in the name of health for proper aging, and wait for the happy day of 'red envelope gifting.'" Said Vo, lauding one of her favorite holidays: "Basically, money is given out during Tet — the Vietnamese New Year — where we get rid of the old and welcome the lucky days to come with a cleaned-up house."

Vo regrets not having a chance to visit her family's ancestral home ... yet. But she already has a plan and strategy for when that milestone comes around. "When I first step foot in Vietnam, I'll be on a mission to sample all the exotic fruits my mom raved about growing up!"

Being part of a close-knit and hardworking immigrant family, Vo has developed a reflective and self-scrutinizing nature that allows her to look back to the child she once

was and see how far she has gone to achieve her goals. "The younger me was much more shy, but that never stopped her from dreaming big with high expectations."

As part of the 2016 Rose Festival Court, Vo has travelled around the state representing David Douglas and East Portland in various community outreach events. She considers her experiences as part of the Rose Festival Court among the "most unforgettable" of her life.

"The places I've visited, people I've met, and opportunities given to me were all rich experiences I wouldn't have had otherwise if it weren't for the amazing Rose Festival Court program," she said.

"I've gained another family. I know for sure that we'll all make an effort to stay updated with each other, but for now, I'm honestly dreading the day we say our goodbyes."

A Rose Festival princess represents her school and acts as the "face of the Rose Festival" at many events in the community, including parades, volunteer activities, luncheons with community and business leaders, and more. The Portland Rose Festival Foundation awards each court member a \$3,500 scholarship, courtesy of The Randall Group.

To qualify for the Rose Festival Court, a candidate must be a full-time junior or senior at a 4A, 5A, or 6A high school in Multnomah, Washington, or Clackamas county and have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0. Potential princesses are evaluated on citizenship, scholastic achievement, school activities, civic involvement, volunteer projects, communication skills, and overall impression.

The Portland Rose Festival Queen is chosen from all of the court members at Portland's Veterans Memorial Coliseum on Saturday, June 11 from 8:30am to 9:30am. To learn more, call (503) 227-2681 or visit <www.rosefestival.org>.

Support the efforts of The Asian Reporter Foundation while shopping at Fred Meyer! It's easy!

Just link your rewards card to The AR Foundation's number, which is **91860**, at <www.FredMeyer.com/CommunityRewards>.

(Linking does not affect your current card rewards.)

2 YEAR PRICE GUARANTEE

Get the same TV package price every month for 2 years with qualifying AT&T wireless service. Guaranteed! w/24 mo. agmt.*

Ask me how to Bundle and save. CALL TODAY!

YRHW Satellite
503-974-4388



*New approved residential DIRECTV customers only (equipment lease req'd). Reqs qual. AT&T wireless phone svc w/in 60 days. Credit card req'd (except MA & PA). Pro-rated ETF fee (up to \$480) and Equipment Non-Return fees apply.

ALL INCLUDED PACKAGE OFFER: Ends 7/13/16. Includes All Included TV Pkg and monthly fees for HD DVR + up to 3 add'l receivers. **Wireless:** Consumers only. Sold separately. Reqs AT&T postpaid svc on elig. plan (excl. Lifetime & Residential Wireless) on a smartphone or phone (excl. Wireless Home Phone) w/in 60 days of TV svc order. **Svcs:** Both svc addresses must match. To be elig. for guarantee both services must remain active & in good-standing through end of 2nd year. **Price Guarantee:** TV Pkg only. After 24 mos. (or if lose eligibility), then-prevailing monthly rate for All Included TV Pkg applies, unless customer calls to cancel/change service prior to the end of 24 mos. Price excludes taxes, equipment upgrades/add-ons and other chrgs. Some offers may not be available through all channels and in select areas. See att.com/directv.

DIRECTV SVC TERMS Subject to Equipment Lease & Customer Agreements. Must maintain a min. base TV pkg of \$29.99/mo. **Add'l Fees & Terms:** Regional Sports fee of up to \$6.39/mo. assessed with CHOICE Pkg and MAS ULTRA Pkg and above. \$7/mo. for each add'l Receiver and/or Genie Mini/DIRECTV Ready TV/Device; \$5/mo. for TiVo service for TiVo HD DVR from DIRECTV. Taxes not included. \$19.95 Handling & Delivery fee may apply. Programming, pricing, terms and conditions subject to change at any time. Visit directv.com/legal or call for details.

WIRELESS SVC TERMS: Subj. to Wireless Customer Agmt (att.com/wca). Svcs are not for resale. Credit approval req'd. Deposit may apply. Fees, monthly & other charges, usage & other restrictions apply. Pricing, promotions, & terms subject to change & may be modified or terminated at any time without notice. Coverage & svc not avail. everywhere. You get an off-net (roaming) usage allowance for each svc. If you exceed the allowance, your svcs(s) may be restricted or terminated. Other restr's apply & may result in svc termination. See att.com/wireless or a store for details. Offers may not be combined with other promotional offers on the same services and may be modified or discontinued at any time without notice. Other conditions apply to all offers. ©2016 AT&T Intellectual Property. All Rights Reserved. AT&T, GLOBE logo, DIRECTV, and all other DIRECTV marks contained herein are trademarks of AT&T Intellectual Property and/or AT&T affiliated companies. All other marks are the property of their respective owners.

125 PERFORMANCES · 70 CULTURES · 2 DAYS · 1 WORLD



WORLD BEAT FESTIVAL 2016

JUNE 25+26
RIVERFRONT PARK · SALEM

