

Commitment to social issues defines Wilson's Rose Festival princess

By Maileen Hamto
The Asian Reporter

Wilson High School's Maggie Beutler is driven by the need to achieve "the next great accomplishment." Vying for the 2017 Portland Rose Festival crown, Maggie was motivated to win the opportunity to represent her high school in one of Portland's most iconic institutions.

"I wanted to know I could do something not everyone could. When the Rose Court came along, I knew I had to push myself to say, 'I can and will do this,'" she said.

Academically gifted, Maggie has been on Wilson High's Honor Roll since freshman year and is a proud member of the National Honor Society. She also participates in Mock Trial, the women's tennis team, the Feminist Union, and Asian Pacific Islanders. Despite the hard work and commitment she devoted to accumulating these honors, Maggie considers the journey that has taken her thus far as her most important accomplishment.

"The thing I am most proud of isn't my grades or awards, but the wonderful group of friends I have found and the community which surrounds me," she said. "My ability to develop over the past four years may have taken me a bit of time. I am proud of the friends I have kept, the temptation I have refused, and the person I have become."

As an adopted Chinese daughter, Maggie said she is honored to have an opportunity to explore her cultural roots. Her family celebrates the Lunar New Year and she is motivated to continue learning about myriad Chinese traditions.

At 10 years old, Beutler returned to Guixi, China with her parents — an eye-opening experience that continues to teach lessons to this day.

"I saw the orphanage where I lived the first year of my life," Maggie said of her visit. "I did not grasp the full gravity of the situation at the time; I know now the issue surrounding children in foster care is one that should not be ignored."

Maturity that comes from teachable life experiences is remarkably well-developed in Maggie's cultural self-awareness, as she navigates her teenage years with eyes wide open. "I have had my fair share of microaggressions, and even dealt with some very unkind racism. Therefore, I know that while I do not always see my color, other people always do," she said.

Reconciling the intersectionality of cultural identities has inspired Maggie to become part of Wilson's feminist club. She is eager to learn from and lead her peers in deepening their collective understanding of gender dynamics and the different ways gender identity can



THOUGHTFUL & EMPATHETIC. Maggie Beutler (left photo) is seen with friends Gracie (right photo, left) and Clodagh (right photo, right). Beutler is representing Wilson High School as its 2017 Rose Festival princess. The Portland Rose Festival's Queen's Coronation takes place Saturday, June 10 at Portland's Veterans Memorial Coliseum. (Photos courtesy of Maggie Beutler)

impact experiences.

"I will defend myself and the rights of others in the name of equality. Because I believe that in this world, the act of living should never be threatened, questioned, or judged because of someone's gender."

With her ever-growing awareness of social issues, it's no wonder that writing and photography — two of Maggie's favorite things — require thoughtfulness and empathy, the ability to step inside someone else's reality. With her interest and skills in photography, Maggie relishes her newfound role as a paid senior photographer. She considers portrait photography as both challenging and edifying.

"The kind of satisfaction that comes with helping someone to realize their own individual beauty cannot be described. And I am deeply humbled whenever I am able to help someone love themselves a little bit more," she said.

Leveraging her gift in the written word, Maggie is interested in pursuing a writing career in film or television, particularly for "Saturday Night Live." She said she has been drawn to work in satire for some time.

"Comedy is a way to evoke conversation and call to question, 'if we cannot laugh in hard times, what can we do?'" Maggie explained. "Satire can bring both joy and call attention to some very important issues."

When asked about her soon-to-start stint on the court, Maggie said she is excitedly looking forward to the different events and ceremonies while learning more about the City of Portland along the way.

"I am both honored and humbled by the opportunity to give back to the community, all it has given me. And in many ways I feel as though the Rose Court has shined a light on both me and my school," Maggie said. "I am very excited to represent my school, my city, and my culture."

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 10 from 8:30am to 9:30am. To learn more, call (503) 227-2681 or visit <www.rosefestival.org>.

Foreign adoptions to U.S. families continue long decline

Continued from page 8

critic of State Department adoption policy, acknowledged that lapses related to all three issues were "a black eye on adoption." However, he said the State Department should have been providing more leadership in addressing the problems.

"These negative results are not the experiences of the great majority of internationally adopted children nor of their adoptive families; neither are the actions of a few providers indicative of the majority of accredited U.S. adoption providers," Johnson said in an e-mail.

Adoption officials in the State Department "have a history of either personally opposing intercountry adoption outright or endorsing it in lukewarm fashion," Johnson wrote. As long as the department "is allowed to continue down this path, children suffer and die."

Susan Jacobs urged the department's critics in the adoption community to

consider what steps they could take to ensure that international adoption is ethical and transparent.

"We are committed to intercountry adoption. We want this to be available in every country in the world," said Jacobs. "But we can't do this without the cooperation of everybody involved in the process. We want this to be a practice that everyone can be proud of."

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