

Love of art, music inspires St. Mary's Academy's Rose Festival princess

By Maileen Hamto
The Asian Reporter

Representing St. Mary's Academy (SMA) — Oregon's only all-female high school — on the Portland Rose Festival Court is a special honor for 2017 princess Lucy Sagoo. Sharing and building community with driven and determined young women in a rigorous academic environment truly creates tomorrow's leaders, which happens to be the motto at SMA.

"I think in an all-girls environment, women are much more focused and confident, which makes for interesting and mature classes," Lucy said. "I feel it is one of the most empowering and enriching experiences a young woman can have."

At St. Mary's, Lucy has been part of the elite, audition-only Marian Singers choir. She was among the 50-member choir that made history in 2015, becoming the first all-women's choir to win the Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) championship, besting larger choirs throughout the state.

"Winning state with the Marian Singers is a memory that stands out among the rest," Lucy said.

"Art is a crucial part of education. Whether it's painting, drawing, or singing, I think art is something that each and every high school student should be involved in. To me, art is one of the most important things in life, especially music."

Lucy credits her grandmother for instilling a love of music at an early age. It was also her grandmother who first introduced her to the Portland Rose Festival.

"My grandma used to take me to the Rose Festival and we would watch the parades together," she said. "Since then, I have wanted to contribute all I can to Portland's wonderful celebration. When the opportunity became available, I jumped at the chance to represent my school."

This year, Lucy is among seven princesses who identify as Asian Pacific Islander (API), representing the Rose Festival's largest contingent of young women with an API background.

"My ethnic background is mixed," she said. "My father is Indian and my mother is Irish, so I have always lived between two cultures. I am proud to identify with both sides of my heritage."

Embracing her South Asian heritage has allowed Lucy to connect with family members on the other side of the globe, she explained. "I am proud of every single aspect of



SINGER & STUDENT. Lucy Sagoo, St. Mary's Academy's 2017 Rose Festival princess, rides a horse at the Pendleton Round-Up venue in Pendleton, Oregon while travelling around the state of Oregon with the 2017 Portland Rose Festival Court. Lucy's grandmother first introduced her to the Portland Rose Festival. "My grandma used to take me to the Rose Festival and we would watch the parades together," Sagoo said. The Portland Rose Festival's Queen's Coronation takes place Saturday, June 10 at Portland's Veterans Memorial Coliseum.

my culture and I am more than happy to represent it every day."

Bringing her full self to the Rose Festival has been a learning opportunity for Lucy, who thrives in the different experiences offered by serving on the court. Beyond appearances at community and business events throughout the state, each princess also benefits from having a mentor — a woman executive who volunteers her time to provide college and career advice.

"I am really looking forward to working with my job shadow. The Rose Festival has given us the opportunity to shadow a person who is currently working in the field we are interested in," she said. "I am personally excited to learn all I can so I am prepared with a notion of what I want to do heading to college this fall."



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>. To learn about other Asian representatives on the 2017 Rose Festival Court — Maggie Beutler of Wilson High School, Tiffany Nguyen of David Douglas High School, Keeley Nguyen of Franklin High School, and Michaela Canete of Century High School (Metro West) — visit <www.asianreporter.com/nwlocal.htm>. Please also read about Mele Kavapalu of Madison High School and Madisyn Montgomery of Oregon City High School (Metro East) on pages 9 and 11.

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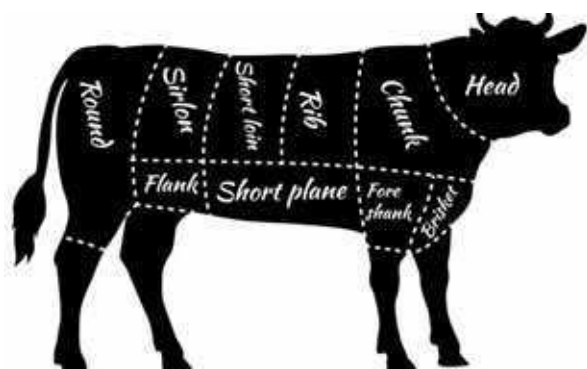
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