



## STAR FEATURE

# Royal Rosarians ready to return

After two-year pandemic pause, Rose Festival's official goodwill ambassadors are excited to get back to the basics



ambassadors haven't laid low during the pandemic, however. They continued their charitable and community service activities throughout the pause in the festival.

"It's just a really wonderful philanthropic organization," Rosarian Jan Tolman said. "It benefits so many, so much."

One of Tolman's favorites is delivering checks to schools to support student field trips. For the 2021-22 school year, the Royal Rosarian Foundation budgeted \$10,000 to schools to pay the fees for students whose families couldn't afford the cost.

"That's one of the ones particularly keen to my heart," Tolman said. "When I was a child, I was part of a huge family, and we couldn't afford field trips. If you didn't have the money, you didn't go."

When field trips weren't possible during

online schooling, the funds went toward sack lunches.

Those funds come from the Royal Rosarian Foundation, the nonprofit arm of the Royal Rosarians. Among other service projects are:

- Christmas for Kids, which allows children in need to shop free — with the help of Rosarians — for themselves and their loved ones
  - Scholarships for children's music instruction, workshops and performances
  - Backpacks and materials for children whose families can't afford the supplies
  - Salary for one full-time instructional assistant at Community Transitional School
- Naturally, Rose Festival season is the busiest for the Rosarians. Ask Cindy Marker which Rosarian activity is her favorite, and

she's torn between marching in the Starlight Parade and the Junior Parade.

Having grown up in Beaverton and now a longtime Alameda resident, Marker enjoyed walking from home to the parade before she became a Rosarian five-and-a-half years ago. Now, after arriving at the route she walks in the parade.

Her second year, she was excited to accompany the Alameda Elementary School marching band. "I might as well have been walking with a celebrity," she said. That was Tom Cheek, school music teacher. "Any kid who's gone to Alameda knew Mr. Cheek."

Tolman, who's nearing 50 years of involvement in the Junior Parade, said that's still her favorite event. In fact, after rubbing elbows with Rosarians at that parade for several years, she was invited to become one not long after the Rosarians began admitting women. Tolman is the 15th woman to join the group, and she continues to enjoy the high energy of her fellow Rosarians.

For David Althaus, the Starlight and Grand Floral parades have always been on his festival schedule. After recently becoming Lord High Steward and joining

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The Rosarians are coming. The Rosarians are coming.

Three local members of the Royal Rosarians are excited about the return of the Portland Rose Festival's (nearly) traditional schedule. They'll don their white suits and hats to add their ceremonial pageantry to all three parades, plus the many events coming back from a two-year pandemic hiatus.

They and their fellow Portland goodwill




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the organization's governing council, he'll add the June 8 Junior Parade to his list.

Althaus inherited the council position and title following the death of Mary Getty early this year. He organizes the Rosarians' participation in other parades, local and elsewhere in the Northwest. According to Althaus, he knows he has big shoes to fill, but he's confident plenty of Rosarians will volunteer.

"Every Rosarian's everything to do is march in parades," he said. "I like how we're Portland focused and reach out to other communities."

It's also a delight for him to join teams of Rosarians greeting dignitaries arriving at the Portland International Airport, although that opportunity was vastly reduced for two years. "When you go to those airport greetings and meet those people, they're so thrilled."

Providing community service is a key value to the 100-year-old organization, and Rosarians have learned joy is a byproduct — both for themselves and for others.

Marker described her experiences at Rosarian and Rose Festival events as magical. "People are just happy."

"I'm thrilled we have the opportunity to connect with the community," Marker said. "That's what it's all about. We're not just dress-up people."

*In April, from left, Cindy Marker, Jan Tolman and David Althaus attended the Blessing of the Rose Festival to kick off the season with renewed enthusiasm and events.  
(Royal Rosarians)*

