

Meet the 2018 Fiesta Mexicana court

The Fiesta Mexicana Court has represented the festival and Woodburn for 55 years, including this year's nine young ladies who voiced excitement about learning leadership and public speaking skills while getting involved in the community.

This year, Chemeketa Community College, which has offered scholarships to the Fiesta Queen and First Princess for many years, has stepped up even more, providing transportation to events, conference rooms for lectures, a talk on navigating college and a mentor in Adriande Lutz, who is program assistant at the Chemeketa Woodburn campus. It also has representation on the Fiesta Court Committee, along with city of Woodburn staff, which will name the queen and first princess, based on a points system, at the coronation on Aug. 3, the opening day of Fiesta Mexicana.

"We support education and Chemeketa is a good place to start," said Elias Villegas, dean of students at the Woodburn campus, about why Chemeketa is supporting the court. "We want them to start thinking about college."

Other organizations supporting the court include Elena's Fabric and Jewelry, which has provided sashes, tiaras and fasteners at a discounted rate; Dress for Success, located in Portland, which will provide three outfits to each court member, as well as training and a makeover (they'll receive haircuts and makeup); AAA and Oregon Humanities, which will provide discussions for the court regarding women empowerment and leadership skills; Woodburn Premium Outlets, which will provide each princess with a swag bag; and Canyonview Camp outside of Silverton, which will provide horseback riding lessons.

Additionally, the court will be out and about in the community. This past weekend, court members represented Fiesta at Woodburn's Relay for Life and at the World Beat Festival in Salem. They will be able to practice their public speaking skills via a radio interview and through visits to local service organizations.

At the Fiesta, which is Aug. 3-5 in Legion Park, the court will be in the parade and will volunteer at various booths and activities.

—Lindsay Keefer

BIANCA ARANDA



ARANDA

GRADE & SCHOOL: Senior at Blanchet Catholic School (lives in Woodburn)

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Youth Advisory Board, church volunteer, Friends of Benedictine, National Honor Society.

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BEING ON THE FIESTA COURT: Growing up I remember looking up to (the court) because they represented strong, independent Latina women, which is what I aspire to be for my community. I want to be able to give back and embrace my Mexican culture.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCE: I hope to strengthen my leadership skills, to give back to my community more.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT FIESTA MEXICANA: Definitely the horses dancing. I just really enjoy how different parts of the community are able to come together to celebrate our culture. Also the various traditions how they show the different aspects of Mexican culture, because there are different parts of Mexico.

OTHER COMMENTS: When I found out they were having applications for the court, I started telling people about it, telling them what it is and why it's so important to me. I definitely am not scared to let people know my traditions and how I feel.

LIZETH BARBOSA HERRERA

GRADE & SCHOOL: Graduate of Academy of International Studies

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Migrant summer school, blood drive organizer, indigenous languages club, ballet



BARBOSA HERRERA

folklorico, food bank volunteer, Link Crew

FUTURE GOALS: Go to Chemeketa for two years and enroll in their nursing program, then transfer to either Warner Pacific or Linfield.

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BEING ON THE FIESTA COURT: You get to be at the parade and it's cool to see how the princesses and the queen were noticed by the community, so we know who is representing Woodburn. I think I'm a representation of Woodburn. I think it's really fun.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCE: I want to have my leadership skills and my communication skills more developed, so I can be a social person and just know more people, so I can create more relationships.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT FIESTA MEXICANA: My favorite is the rides. Also getting to see everyone from Woodburn; everyone in Woodburn gathers at the Fiesta Mexicana. We're all happy when we're all together and helping each other.

OTHER COMMENTS: I think I should represent Woodburn as a Latina because I was raised here almost my whole life. I think the Fiesta would make me reconnect to my roots. I would get to see a little taste of Mexico. I was born in Oaxaca and I moved here when I was 1, so I have no memory of it.

RUBY GONZALEZ



GONZALEZ

GRADE & SCHOOL: Graduate of Woodburn Arts and Communications Academy

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Theater, NHS, volunteering at Arthur Academy.

FUTURE GOALS: I'm going to attend Western Oregon University starting in the fall and major in social work.

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BEING ON THE FIESTA COURT: I am Latina and my dad had to go through a lot to be able to be here. We never knew how much that meant to him until recently with all the political things going on. So I thought this is a good way to show I'm proud too.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCE: More of my heritage; we're going to do a lot of workshops with Latino stuff and things like that. I also need more help with college things because that is my next step (we're going to take a training class for that).

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT FIESTA MEXICANA: My mom works for H&R Block which had a booth last year. They had the green fluffy people, and I was one of those people! I like the rides; I go on them with friends.

OTHER COMMENTS: I was in two theater productions. It helped me with not being so shy. I was like, it's not that bad being in front of people. I was also in National American Miss Pageant in Portland. We went for a whole weekend and they show you poise and proper manners, how to talk to people, things like that. It's a lot more nerve-wracking to be in front of people I know (in Woodburn) than strangers in Portland.

JENNIFER GONZALEZ SALGADO

GRADE & SCHOOL: Senior at WACA

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Link Crew, ECOMC Scholars Program

FUTURE GOALS: I want to graduate with above 3.0 and become a nurse. I think (I'd like to attend) Linfield College.

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BEING ON THE FIESTA COURT: I want to represent my culture and inspire other girls to not be



GONZALEZ SALGADO

afraid to represent who they are and where they come from. I was kind of afraid but my cousin Daisy inspired me.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCE: I hope to learn to lead others and teach others and become a better person.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT FIESTA MEXICANA: My favorite part of Fiesta is when they all get together and they dance. I like to watch the dancing.

OTHER COMMENTS: My family has always taught me the importance of our culture, to not let it get lost, to always keep it going. I was born in Alabama, then I was in Mexico for eight years, then I came here in fourth grade. It was really hard because I had to learn the language.

RUBY LOPEZ MORALES



LOPEZ MORALES

GRADE & SCHOOL: Senior at AIS

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Key Club, Nuevo Amanecer Girl Scout leader, teaching assistant at Nellie Muir Elementary summer school, Link Crew, NHS, volunteer at church and its food bank, AVID, Youth Advisory Board

FUTURE GOALS: My main goal right now is to get lots of scholarships to go to college, either at Pacific University or Linfield College because I want to become an optometrist. It would be great to come back because I see a lot of people don't have a lot of medical services, so it would be really good to help with that.

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BEING ON THE FIESTA COURT: It's one of my family tradition, we normally stay all three days. I love the culture. When I was younger I would always tell my mom I wanted to be a (Fiesta) princess. I want my family to look up to me. It seemed like a good opportunity to be involved with the community.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCE: Leadership skills, talking in public. I would also like learning to demonstrate that it's possible to reach your goals even though you struggled.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT FIESTA MEXICANA: I like the rides, though I'm scared of heights. But my favorite is the parade because I love watching the horses, the girls waving from the cars, the culture. It's really fun. A lot of people from around the community come.

OTHER COMMENTS: I'm bilingual but I really struggled with Spanish when I was younger because I went to a private school where they only spoke English. ... And now I'm taking IB Spanish. I'm Mexican, I didn't want to lose my language.

MELISSA MORALES



MORALES

GRADE & SCHOOL: Graduate of AIS

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Volunteering at the food bank and Nuevo Amanecer, helping with my dad's business

FUTURE GOALS: Graduating from college, finding a job that I like, basically to live the American Dream, to get a job and support myself.

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BEING ON THE FIESTA COURT: I

wanted to last year. I joined this year because I really wanted to be a role model. I always thought I'm not pretty enough, but this year I gained confidence, I want to show everybody you can do it.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCE: Mostly community service, involving myself more in the community because in school I didn't do as much as I could.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT FIESTA MEXICANA: First time I went was last year, actually. The bandas that come, it was super fun to dance with everybody. It was fun to see my friends who participated in the court last year.

MARGARITA MORALES BARAJAS



MORALES BARAJAS

GRADE & SCHOOL: Graduate of AIS

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: AIS radio program, president of National Art Honor Society, YAB, Nuevo Amanecer Girl Scout leader, volunteer at Nellie Muir

FUTURE GOALS: I plan to attend Oregon State University to study to become an elementary teacher.

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BEING ON THE FIESTA COURT: I'm friends with girls who were on it last year and my sister was on it before, and I saw how fun it was for her and my friends. I want to meet these girls I'm going to be working with for quite a while, I want to make more connections in the community, I want to meet new people.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCE: More leadership skills and connections. I want to know the people

around Woodburn. And not be afraid of public speaking. I want to become a better person.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT FIESTA MEXICANA: I love how they have singers throughout the day and we get to dance. The food is very good, I like having fun with my friends, I like the rides, doing stuff with my family. It's a tradition going, we go every year.

OTHER COMMENTS: I'm a very proud Mexican. I like being part of the culture. I enjoy it a lot. I enjoy every little thing about it. That's why I want to be queen, I want to represent all that in our community.

ELISABETH RANGEL PEREZ



RANGEL PEREZ

GRADE & SCHOOL: Senior at AIS

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Volunteer at Nuevo Amanecer and for elementary school carnivals & movie nights.

FUTURE GOALS: My no. 1 goal is to go to college, I'll be the first in my family, and to be an architect. Also staying stable financially, because that's been a problem for my family.

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BEING ON THE FIESTA COURT: My friend Daisy was on the court last year and she told me I should do it. I've been trying to do new things because I can be shy.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCE: I hope to learn to work more as a team. I hope to be able to gain more strength as a woman.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT FIESTA MEXICANA: I like to see a lot of different people. We've gone every year; it's a family tradition. A lot of people come together and I think that's cool.

OTHER COMMENTS: I'm energetic, I like to make friends. Since I started working at an ice cream shop, I interact with more people so that's where I started to let my shyness go. I love interacting with customers; sometimes they make my day.

AURORA VILLA JUAN



VILLA JUAN

GRADE & SCHOOL: Senior at AIS

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: NHS, NAHS, Upward Bound, tennis, volunteer at church

FUTURE GOALS: I'd like to go to maybe Linfield or Willamette. I'm not sure what to go into it, I'm thinking something with STEM, maybe chemistry.

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BEING ON THE FIESTA COURT: I have two friends who did it last year and they said it was a good opportunity to get involved. I realized I'm not really connected with my community.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCE: I hope to work on collaboration and teamwork, also communications. I get really anxious and nervous but I'm trying to work on that.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT FIESTA MEXICANA: I actually never went to Fiesta until a little bit ago. I didn't even know there was a queen and princess until two years ago. The parade caught my attention, and also all the activities the court does.

OTHER COMMENTS: I was born in Mexico and I came to Woodburn at the age of 6. I started learning English through the school district's dual language program. I realized other districts don't have that. I have five brothers and two sisters; I'm the youngest.

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