

Taia Buffie

Vernon Winter Carnival Scholarship Essay

Winter Magic and Memories

February, with its short days and cold nights, is for many the worst month of the year. But for me, and for many other Vernon residents, something that brings joy through this dreary month is the Vernon Winter Carnival. Whether watching the hot air balloons in amazement, bundling up to go watch the parade, or spending time with family at the various fun events, the winter carnival has created some of my fondest memories.

My family has been an active part of the Vernon community for generations. Since I can remember, the winter carnival has been a part of our family traditions. My grandparents were heavily involved in the carnival and were carnival judges for years. As a little girl, I remember dressing up in matching clown costumes with my grandma and grandpa, going all over Vernon to judge the window decorations of all the businesses. Some years, my brothers and I would participate in the Polar Bear Swim. Looking back at the pictures of myself shivering in my bathing suit in front of a snowy backdrop with ice floating in the water, I am proud and amazed that I was brave enough to do it. One of the most memorable traditions for me was a big potluck breakfast before the parade. Every year, we would go over to my grandparents' friends' house with many other families and have an amazing breakfast filled with good food, conversation and excitement in anticipation of the parade.

Each year I looked forward to the parade. It was my favorite part of the carnival. I would bundle up in my snowsuit and mitts, carrying my hot chocolate, and head down to the curb. I would watch the floats in awe and jump with excitement when they would give out candy. One year, I got to ride on a float and it was an unforgettable experience. I felt like a celebrity. I told all of my friends that they should watch for me and when I saw them in the crowd my heart filled with joy. My favorite float of all was the Queen Silver Star float. Seeing all the beautiful girls in their dresses with sparking crowns felt like magic when I was little. My aunt had been Queen Silver Star and I always had dreams of becoming Queen or Princess Silver Star one day. My parents would take me to meet them when they made appearances and we would take photos. To me they were royalty and I was amazed and inspired by how kind they were.

The carnival brings much joy to my family and I. It has created many fond memories of fun experiences. I know that the carnival impacts many other families around Vernon just as it impacts mine. Now that I am older, I still love all of the events,

but I also appreciate the unity that the carnival brings to our community. Young and old come together as volunteers, spectators, participants or simply community members looking for a way to enjoy our city. The Vernon Winter Carnival will always hold a special place in my heart. I cherish the memories it has given me and look forward to enjoying it for years to come.