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LANTERN FESTIVAL 2006

LOS ANGELES (January 24, 2006) -- The Chinese American Museum's (CAM) most beloved tradition is celebrating its milestone fifth year! Making its fifth grand appearance on *Saturday, February 18, 2006 from 12 noon – 7pm* at El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, the famed birthplace of the city of Los Angeles and now home to the Chinese American Museum, **Lantern Festival 2006** will blend traditional Chinese entertainment with a unique educational twist! With an exciting line-up of stage performances and a thrilling variety of arts and crafts workshops, the festival's mission to educate as well as to entertain has a little something for everyone.

A hugely popular holiday in the Chinese culture, Lantern Festival occurs annually on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month to mark the closing of Chinese New Year festivities. As families wish for peace and prosperity for the coming year, colorful and lively lanterns are hung in homes and throughout the streets to celebrate this jubilant occasion.

Lantern Festival 2006 will spotlight a Chinese American re-creation of a traditional village street fair featuring brilliant lantern displays, exciting musical, acrobatic and lion dance performances, a fun lantern making contest for children in grades 1 through 6, and to cap off the evening, a spirited lantern parade where children and their families are welcome to march with dancers and musicians in a route encircling the entire El Pueblo park. More than 15,000 visitors are expected to attend this year's event. Participation at the festival will be free of charge.

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A variety of educationally enriching workshops showcasing both traditional Chinese and culturally diverse arts and crafts will be presented as well. Here, visitors can try their hands at lantern making, string knotting, Chinese opera face painting, kite building, origami, calligraphy and Chinese and Mexican paper-design cutting. The time-honored tradition of tea drinking, the ancient art of feng shui and the healing powers of acupuncture can also be intimately explored with the help of experts available on-site at the event.

Lantern Festival 2006 represents a departure from most other street event celebration because the primary focus will be on education rather than just entertainment. The event's program strives to present the visiting public with a unique and interactive opportunity to learn and appreciate the history, traditions and customs of this Chinese holiday. In anticipation of the event, special educational packets based on Lantern Festival are carefully prepared by the Museum Educator and distributed among the greater Los Angeles Unified School District in an effort to reach a broad and diverse audience of teachers and students. Each packet contains information and exercises stressing the history and values of the holiday as well as fun arts and crafts activities for teachers to integrate into their classroom curriculum.

The Friends of the Chinese American Museum is a 501(c)(3) charitable, non-profit corporation serving as the support group, advisor and community link for the Museum. CAM's mission is to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of America's diverse heritage by researching, preserving, and sharing the history, rich cultural legacy, and continuing contributions of Chinese Americans. For more information, please visit www.camla.org.

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