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## **Brighten your Day with the Sights and Sounds of Lantern Festival 2003 Chinese Holiday Celebration Aims To Educate As Well As Entertain**

LOS ANGELES (January 10, 2003) -- The sleepy alley on Sanchez Street will soon awake to the vibrant lights, music, and bustling activity of Lantern Festival 2003. Presented by the Chinese American Museum, this delightful celebration will be held on Saturday, February 22, 2003 1-7p.m., and staged at El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, the historical birthplace of the City of Los Angeles as well as the site of its original Chinatown.

A hugely popular holiday in China, 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 event.

Since its phenomenal debut in 2002, Lantern Festival 2003 heralds the return of this traditional Chinese holiday celebration in Los Angeles' Old Chinatown following over half a century-long absence. More than 10,000 visitors are expected to attend. Participation at the festival will be free of charge. Themed "Lighting the Way," Lantern Festival 2003 will spotlight a Chinese American re-creation of a traditional village street fair. With dazzling displays of luminous lanterns serving as the backdrop, the event will feature exciting musical, acrobatic and dragon dance performances, animated storytelling in Chinese, English and Spanish, a fun lantern design contest for children in grades 1 through 6, vibrant art exhibitions, Chinese-opera style face painting, and to cap off the evening, a joyful lantern parade where children and their families are welcome to march with dancers and musicians in a route encircling the entire park.

Sagwa the Chinese Siamese Cat from KCET's popular kids program will also be featured at the Festival to help greet children and parents. Visitors are encouraged to bring their cameras to snap a fun photo with this lovable television character!

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Additionally, a variety of enriching workshops showcasing traditional Chinese arts and crafts will be present as well. Here, visitors may try their hand at lantern designs, Chinese knot-tying, calligraphy and paper-cutting, palm leaf figurine making, origami-folding, and kite-building. The time-honored tradition of tea drinking and the ancient art of feng shui can be intimately explored with the help of tea instructors and feng shui masters available on-site at the event.

Lantern Festival 2003 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 teach the visiting public about the history, traditions and customs of this Chinese holiday. Moreover, months before the festival date, educational packets carefully prepared by the Museum educator were distributed among the greater Los Angeles Unified School District in an effort to reach a diverse audience of teachers and students; each packet contained information 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©(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](http://www.camla.org).

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