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LANTERN FESTIVAL 2005

LOS ANGELES (January 12, 2005) -- The Chinese American Museum's (CAM) most beloved tradition is back and better than ever! Making its fourth grand appearance on Saturday, February 19, 2005 from 12 noon – 6pm at El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, the famed birthplace of the city of Los Angeles and now home to the newly opened Chinese American Museum, Lantern Festival 2005 will blend traditional Chinese entertainment with a unique educational twist! With an exciting line-up of stage performances and a wide variety of arts and crafts booths, 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. This year's celebration 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, picture-taking opportunities with Chinese empress, emperor and imperial guard costume characters, 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 charge.

Established local community artists Cindy Suriyani, Dominique Moody and Michael Massenburg will team up to lead a brand new "story-making" booth where children and adults will be provided with materials and guidance on how to tell and create their own stories through various paper printing and collage techniques. Booth visitors will also have the rare opportunity to meet and chat with Cindy Suriyani, whose work is now on display at the Museum in a temporary exhibit entitled, (Invisible): Angel Island, a mixed media installation named after the grueling immigration processing center in San Francisco Bay and the entry point for many of the Chinese immigrants coming to America between 1910 and 1940.

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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 and the ancient art of feng shui can be intimately explored with the help of a tea instructor and feng shui masters available on-site at the event.

For the first time since the festival's revival, the Chinese American Museum will be open to the public during the day-long celebration. Having just commemorated its one year anniversary on December 18, 2004, CAM is downtown Los Angeles' newest cultural destination and the first ever museum in Southern California dedicated to telling the stories and experiences of more than 150 years of Chinese American life and history in the Los Angeles area. With special extended hours until 5 p.m., free admission and docent-guided tours, visitors will be able to explore the Museum's permanent and temporary exhibits, including the soon-to-be completed Journeys exhibit. Currently a partially partially-finished permanent exhibit focusing on Chinese immigration to the United States, the fully completed exhibit will be ready in time for Lantern Festival 2005, furnished with new flat screen monitors showing oral history interviews, a large-scale timeline featuring photographs and artifacts and educational interactives for both children and adults.

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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