

Longmont honors 'Year of the Dragon' with annual celebration



Members of the Shaolin Hung Mei Kung Fu Association perform the dragon dance. The Asian-Pacific Association of Longmont held its annual Lunar New Year Celebration on Saturday at Silver Creek High School. (Cliff Grassmick/Staff Photographer)



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After a ribbon parade by the Hygiene Elementary Student Council, Longmont Rotary co-president Tim Waters welcomed guests to the event and thanked the many volunteers who helped bring the celebration to life.

"The work that's gone into this is pretty remarkable," Waters said.

Silver Creek High School principal Eric Finnestead recognized audience members who were born in former dragon zodiac years, most recently celebrated in 2012, 2000 and 1988.

"The Year of the Dragon represents those who are resolute, strong, confident and proud," Finnestead told guests.

Longmont Mayor Joan Peck also spoke, sharing her gratitude for the city's role in sponsoring the event for over 10 years. Peck also read a proclamation designating Feb. 19 through 24 as Lunar New Year Week in Longmont for 2024.

"This is one of the events that I think Longmont can be especially proud of," Peck said. "Every year it gets better."

Boulder's Shaolin Hung Mei Kung Fu association dazzled the audience with an elaborate dragon dance, performed using a massive green, gold and red dragon puppet. The dance was followed by even more performances by the association, including martial arts demonstrations with traditional weapons.

A Chinese fashion show featured stunning outfits, several of which merged Eastern and Western designs into the elaborate patterns and headwear. Music from Korea and India was also celebrated with K-Pop and Bollywood dance medleys.

Silver Creek Leadership Academy students helped run the event's many activity booths lining the school's hallways. Some booths were also more focused on educating guests on Asian culture and history, with presentations on Chinese-Americans in Colorado and their struggles for civil rights.

The Year of the Dragon has arrived, and Longmont's Silver Creek High School brought the community together for a vibrant celebration of Lunar New Year.

The event, put on by the [Asian-Pacific Association of Longmont](#), showcased the cultures of several Asian countries that mark Lunar New Year as a joyful start to the spring season.

In the gym of Silver Creek High School, 4901 Nelson Road, roughly 2,000 people showed up to watch the event begin with a variety of live performances.

"Every year, we have so many people come," said Rita Liu, president of A-PAL. "I think this is an opportunity for the whole community to gather for such a happy event."

Many booths involved dragons in some way, from one where kids could paint wooden dragon toys to one displaying drawings of dragons by students across the St. Vrain Valley School District.

"Not only do (students) get to see a big event planned from start to finish, but they really see the nuts and bolts," said Carrie Adams, SCLA program director, of the event. "It's just a great opportunity to have real life leadership experiences."



Dragons were the theme at the annual Lunar New Year Celebration on Saturday at Silver Creek High School, 4901 Nelson Road. (Cliff Grassmick/Staff Photographer)