

Longmont's Silver Creek High School to host Lunar New Year



Members of the Shaolin Hung Mei Kung Fu Association perform a lion dance during the Chinese New Year festival at Silver Creek High School, celebrating the Year of the Rabbit. (Cliff Grassmick/Staff Photographer)



By **DANA CADEY** | dcadey@prairiemountainmedia.com | Longmont Times-Call
PUBLISHED: February 21, 2024 at 5:59 p.m. | UPDATED: February 21, 2024 at 6:03 p.m.

Longmont is preparing to usher in the Year of the Dragon with a free Lunar New Year celebration on Saturday.

Held at Silver Creek High School, the event is an opportunity for the local community to honor and learn about Asian cultural traditions surrounding the start of the new year.

Rita Liu, president of the [Asian-Pacific Association of Longmont](#), recalled her own family's celebrations of Lunar New Year while she was growing up, from lighting lanterns and firecrackers to preparing food for all her neighbors.

"It's such a fun time for children, especially," Liu said.

A-PAL has been hosting a Lunar New Year event in Longmont since 2010. Liu, who founded A-PAL, said she wanted to start the annual event as a way of promoting Asian culture in the city, similar to Longmont's celebrations of Mexican holidays like Cinco de Mayo and Dia de Muertos.

Saturday's event will feature a wide variety of activities, games and performances; there will be complimentary Asian food, including dumplings and fried sesame rice balls.

"It's really interesting and educational, like writing Chinese characters or doing some Chinese painting," Liu said. "It's wonderful –

mutual understanding, learning about each other's culture and respecting each other."

A traditional Chinese dragon dance will kick off the celebration, performed by Boulder's Shaolin Hung Mei Kung Fu association. Performances will continue throughout the day with Chinese and Japanese folk dances, an Indian Bollywood dance and a taiko drum show.

Liu said over 2,000 people attended last year's celebration, and A-PAL is hoping for a similar turnout this year. A-PAL also works with students from the Silver Creek Leadership Academy to run the event.

"It's a perfect opportunity for us to mentor those students every year in

management and organization," Liu said. "They've gotten so involved in making it happen."

Last year was also one of the first times the event shifted away from being called "Chinese New Year," opting instead for the more inclusive "Lunar New Year."

"We (want to) incorporate more countries," Liu explained. "We never limited it to just Chinese, but the name implies something. So I achieved my purpose to promote multiculturalism."

Lunar New Year 2024 will be held from 2 to 5 p.m. Saturday at Silver Creek High School, 4901 Nelson Road. To view a full schedule of events, visit apalconnect.org.