

# Monterey Bay Chinese Association to hold 4th Annual Chinese Cultural Festival



The fourth annual Chinese Cultural Festival will be held on Oct. 16 by the Monterey Bay Chinese Association at the Custom House Plaza in Monterey.

By [TESS KENNY](mailto:tkenny@montereyherald.com) | [tkenny@montereyherald.com](mailto:tkenny@montereyherald.com) | Monterey Herald

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MONTEREY – The Monterey Bay Chinese Association says it will champion inclusion, collaboration and awareness next month as the organization commemorates its fourth annual Chinese Cultural Festival.

To be held for the first time since 2019, this year’s festival will take place on Sunday, Oct. 16 from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Custom House Plaza Monterey. It serves as a local opportunity to promote a better appreciation of Chinese culture and heritage, event organizers explained, adding that the festival aims to uphold diversity and foster connections between cultural groups across the region.

“It’s an important opportunity for reunion among the Chinese community because we have different people of mixed ancestry. But it’s also an opportunity...to welcome different ethnic groups and make connections,” said Yong-Ling Beiman, member of the Monterey Bay Chinese Association. “It’s a gathering of old and new friends, and an experience in which people can explore connections and continuities through culture, art making and entertainment.”

Free to the public, October’s festival will highlight authentic Chinese art, food, games, cultural displays and folk dances. The Monterey Bay Chinese Association has also invited local Japanese and Korean organizations – as well as the Pacific Grove Adult

Education Center – to perform for what it hopes will be a live example of cross-cultural friendship.

“Our goal is to promote harmonious diversity,” Beiman said.

The Chinese Cultural Festival was established in 2017 to ensure the local Chinese community’s presence was not only widely known but understood, said Richard Zhang, president of the Monterey Bay Chinese Association. Zhang, who has been a part of the association since its inception more than eight years ago, said encouraging awareness has always been at the heart of the festival’s purpose.

The Chinese community has deep roots in Monterey Bay. In 1851, a group of Chinese families immigrated to California’s coast and created a fishing village at Point Alones, where Hopkins Marine Station now stands. It was the first, and largest family-based Chinese community in the United States at the time, and is recognized as pioneering Monterey Bay’s commercial fishing industry. Eventually, families dispersed throughout the region when the Point Alones village mysteriously went up in flames in 1906.

Reconciling historical ties with current community members, the Monterey Bay Chinese Association recognizes next month’s festival as a chance to come together and honor the culture collectively.

Embracing the local Chinese community is particularly salient on the Monterey Peninsula as the dust continues to settle from Pacific Grove’s Feast of Lanterns coming to an end earlier this year. Disbanded after widespread complaints about how it appropriated Chinese culture, the Feast of Lanterns prompted city officials to issue an apology for a history of structural racism and discrimination against Chinese immigrants in Pacific Grove.

Asked about holding this year’s Chinese Cultural Festival in the wake of the Feast of Lantern’s dissolution, Zhang assured the two events “are completely separate” and noted that the Monterey Bay Chinese Association is “just trying to get people together to show Chinese culture and build good relationships with the community.”

Echoing Zhang’s push to remain positive, Beiman said “for this event, the performances will be authentic.”

“Chinese performances will be put on by local Chinese people. Japanese performances will be put on by local Japanese people. There will be no culture appropriation,” she continued. “We would like to look at this issue in a positive direction. We want to demonstrate that we are living in a wonderful area... where different ethnic groups get along in harmony. It demonstrates DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion).”