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ALL DOGS GO TO CHINATOWN NYC FOR 2006 YEAR OF THE DOG CELEBRATIONS

*7th Annual Chinatown Lunar New Year Parade & Festival Includes
Dog Parade Section with Pooches Dressed in Traditional Chinese New Year Outfits*

NEW YORK, NY – All dogs go to heaven, but many who are in need of a new home on earth will be pawing their way to Chinatown NYC for Sunday, February 5th's dog parade in the **7th Annual Chinatown Lunar New Year Parade & Festival** to celebrate the 2006 Year of the Dog Lunar New Year. Expected to attract more than 350,000 participants and spectators, the parade and festival is the largest public event in New York's Chinatown, as well as the largest pan-Asian event on the East Coast. Organized by the Better Chinatown Society, this colorful spectacle features traditional lion and dragon dances, ornately decorated floats, marching bands, cultural performances, festive confetti, and new for this year, a special dog parade in honor of the 2006 Year of the Dog where some of the dogs from local animal rescue organizations will be available for adoption.

The spectacle will take place from 1:00pm to 5:00pm starting at Mott and Canal Streets, march down Bowery, and promenade through practically every street of Chinatown before finally dispersing at Worth Street. The parade is expected to conclude at 3:00pm, at which time an outdoor cultural festival will take place on Bayard Street featuring more performances by musicians, dancers and martial artists. **More information on this and other Lunar New Year events and celebrations is available at www.ExploreChinatown.com**

Several hundred dogs from local organizations will march in the dog parade section of the 7th Annual Chinatown Lunar New Year Parade & Festival's and 50 to 100 dogs will be available for adoption. Dog lovers who are looking for furry best friends as new additions to their homes may just find their perfect matches in the parade! The pooches will be donning traditional Chinese New Year-themed outfits and bright orange "Adopt Me" vests and strutting in the parade in hopes of finding a new home. **Visitors to Chinatown NYC who want to dress their own dogs may obtain the adorable traditional Chinese Lunar New Year dog outfits at the Pearl of the Orient gift shop located at 36 Mott Street, off Bayard, (212) 267-5765. Traditional Chinese-themed dog carriers are also available at Peony Red located at 217 Centre Street, off Hester, (212) 655-5428, or its online store at www.peonyred.com.**

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Also known as Chinese New Year and the Spring Festival, Lunar New Year is a two-week celebration that begins on the first day of the first month of the lunar calendar -- a period that typically falls between late January and mid-February – and ends on the full moon 15 days later. It is considered a major holiday across the globe, and is celebrated in Asian countries worldwide. During Lunar New Year, revelers celebrate family and the rejuvenation of the earth and, with it, the start of a new beginning with endless possibilities.

Other highlights of this year's Lunar New Year events include:

- **3rd Annual Chinatown Lunar New Year Flower Market, January 27 & 28, 2006**

*Time: Friday, January 27, 12:00 PM to 10:00 PM
Saturday, January 28th, 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM*

Location: Columbus Park (Mulberry Street between Bayard and Worth Streets)
Visitors can participate in this time-honored tradition with the Museum of Chinese in the Americas (MoCA) and the United East Athletics Association's (UEAA) Third Annual Chinatown Lunar New Year Flower Market. In Chinese communities around the world, going to the market to purchase flowers is a popular way of ushering in the Lunar New Year because flowers bring luck and prosperity in the New Year. Particular flowers such as the peony, peach blossom, kumquat tree, camellia, and narcissus are favored for their auspicious symbolic meanings. For more information please call MoCA at 212-619-4785 or visit www.moca-nyc.org.

- **Chinatown Lunar New Year Firecracker Demonstration & Ceremony, January 29, 2006**

*Time: Sunday, January 29, 12:00 PM
Location: Intersection of Mott and Bayard Streets*

Organized by the Better Chinatown Society, the customary tradition of a firecracker detonation will take place on the actual day of the Lunar New Year to ward off evil spirits for the coming year. Attendance and participation is expected by local politicians and community leaders. Following the ceremonies, a main stage (at the intersection of Mott and Bayard Streets) will feature all-day cultural performances by traditional and contemporary Asian-American singers and dancers. In addition, a dozen lion, dragon and unicorn dance troupes will perform along Chinatown's main streets, including Mott Street, the Bowery, East Broadway, Bayard Street, Elizabeth Street and Pell Street.

For more information on these and other Chinatown NYC Lunar New Year celebratory events, please visit: www.ExploreChinatown.com.

Preparations for Lunar New Year start during the last few days of the last moon. Houses are thoroughly cleaned, debts repaid, hair cut and new clothes purchased. Doors are decorated with vertical scrolls of characters on red papers whose texts seek good luck and praise nature. During the two-week Lunar New Year period itself, numerous ancient traditions are observed, ranging from the preparation of several special foods to the giving of "lucky money" in decorative red envelopes called *lai see*. But perhaps the most popular Lunar New year customs – at least in the West – revolve around lion dances and firecrackers, both of which are used to ward off evil spirits.

Each new lunar year has a corresponding animal representative on the Chinese Zodiac chart. This coming New

Year marks the Year of the Dog. Individuals born under the sign of the dog in the Chinese zodiac (Years 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, and 1994) have a deep sense of loyalty, are honest, and inspire other people's confidence because they know how to keep secrets. But Dog people are also somewhat selfish, stubborn and eccentric. For more information on other signs in the Chinese zodiac, please visit www.ExploreChinatown.com.

PHOTOS AVAILABLE: Colorful and festive photos featuring children with lion dancers and parade of dragon dancers from past events and adorable photos of a little girl and dog in traditional Chinese Lunar New Year outfits for the 2006 Year of the Dog are available in high-resolution formats for media use.

About Chinatown New York City

Chinatown New York City, combines authentic Asian-American culture with the energy and influence of the most exciting city in the world. With over 500 restaurants, numerous Asian bakeries and tea houses, jewelry shops, arts and antique stores, an active nightlife and dozens of cultural attractions and landmarks, Chinatown stands as a world within a city. Whether dining, shopping, or strolling down the charming, narrow streets, visitors to Chinatown New York City, will find virtually limitless opportunities for new experiences and added insight.

Located on the east side of Lower Manhattan, Chinatown New York City, is the largest in the United States. The neighborhood has been growing steadily since the mid-1800s, and today stands as a vibrant community offering the opportunity to enjoy and explore Asian-American culture. Chinatown New York City is easily accessible via many New York City MTA subways and buses, as well as several convenient area parking garages. For more information, visit www.ExploreChinatown.com.

Note to editors: NYC & Company, the city's official tourism marketing organization, is a private, membership-based non-profit dedicated to building New York City's economy and positive image through tourism and convention development, major events and the marketing of the city on a worldwide basis.

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