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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**EXPERIENCE LUNAR NEW YEAR IN CHINATOWN
WITH METROCARD DEALS & DISCOUNTS**

Discounts at Chinatown Restaurants, Shops and the Museum of the Chinese in the Americas

NEW YORK, NY - January 12, 2006 - Traveling to Lunar New Year celebrations this winter has never been so easy or inexpensive. With a swipe of your MetroCard you can be transported to all the fun and festivities surrounding Lunar New Year in Chinatown New York City. This special deals and discounts partnership between the MTA NYC Transit and Chinatown offers visitors a great opportunity to experience the Lunar New Year celebrations in Chinatown from January 29 – February 12, plus save on purchases of Lunar New Year gifts and special meals. The deals and discounts offer is valid through February 15, 2006.

New York City Transit subway and bus customers will receive 10% discounts at select Chinatown restaurants and shops by presenting their MetroCard. **For a complete list of MetroCard deals and discounts in Chinatown visit www.ExploreChinatown.com or www.MTA.info.** Brochures detailing the deals and discounts in Chinatown will also be available at NYC MTA stations and at the Chinatown Information Kiosk located at Canal, Baxter and Walker Streets.

Highlights of 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.

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✍ **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.

✍ **Seventh Annual Chinatown Lunar New Year Parade & Festival, February 5, 2006**

Time: Sunday, February 5, 1:00 PM

Location: Intersection of Mott and Bayard Streets

Organized by the Better Chinatown Society, this main event features elaborate floats, marching bands, lion and dragon dances galore, Asian musicians, magicians, acrobats and processions by local organizations. Over 5,000 people are expected to march in the parade beginning at Mott Street and proceeding through practically every street in Chinatown, and finally dispersing at Worth Street. The parade is expected to conclude at 3:00 pm, at which time an outdoor cultural festival will take place on Bayard Street featuring more performances by musicians, dancers and martial artists. This year's parade will also include a dog parade section with these four-legged creatures dressed in Lunar New Year outfits.

MetroCard Deals is an MTA New York City Transit marketing program that encourages customers to ride subways and buses, during the off-peak hours, by offering discounts to the city's cultural attractions. Usually taking place over a two-month period, the MetroCard Deals program offers participating organizations, cultural institutions and merchants the unique opportunity to reach millions of MetroCard users by offering them exclusive "deals." By presenting a MetroCard at the time of purchase, cardholders can save on everything from admission prices to a gift shop purchase. For more information about current MetroCard Deals and Trips, visit www.mta.info and click on the MetroCard icon or look for SubTalk and BusTalk ads in subway cars and on buses.

About Chinatown New York City

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.