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1/24/08

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**Quincy Lunar New Year Festival Welcomes Year of the Rat at North Quincy High
*Numbers expected to surpass 4,000 with children and family activities***

Quincy, Mass. – The 20th Annual Quincy Lunar New Year Festival will celebrate the Year of the Rat and will take place on Sunday, February 17 at North Quincy High School. Last year's festival attracted an audience turnout of over 4,000, making it one of the most popular and largest celebrations of the Lunar New Year in Massachusetts.

Chinese New Year begins on February 7th and is the most important holiday for Chinese families as it is a time of reunion and thanksgiving. Each New Year is named for one of the twelve animals. According to ancient legend, the Lord Buddha once summoned all animals to come to him. When only twelve came, he rewarded them by challenging the animals to race and naming each year for them in the order they finished. 2008 is the year of the rat.

“The 2008 festival will mark not only the Year of the Rat and the beginning of a new lunar cycle, but the community's 20th year of celebrating our diversity, tradition, and unity in Quincy,” said John Brothers, Executive Director of Quincy Asian Resources Inc. “We hope to build on the success of our previous festivals to bring together the community to celebrate and increase awareness of Asian cultures, and to better serve the needs of Quincy's Asian-American Community.”

Quincy Asian Resources Inc.(QARI), the organization coordinating the event, invites people of all ages to celebrate the annual Lunar New Year event with a variety of free, festive programs scheduled between 10:30 and 4:00. Festivities will include a traditional lion dance, an array of Asian food by local restaurants, a Chinese martial arts demonstration and the ancient celebratory sounds of musical troupes. Additionally, children are invited to enjoy face-painting, games and crafts.

“This year is symbolized by the cunning and innovative Rat, who rode on the back of the Oxen to reach the Buddha first in the race. It is an ideal year to explore new possibilities and ways of thinking, as well as hope for an auspicious new beginning to our endeavors in life” said Josie Ng, Co-Chair of the festival. “We hope everyone will join us in this celebration!”

The festival is well supported by the City of Quincy as well as many sponsors. This, together with the commitment and work of local community groups, businesses, government and social service agencies and individuals in the region, has resulted in the Quincy Lunar New Year Festival becoming a major cultural event for Quincy and the surrounding areas.

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Quincy Asian Resources Inc. is a not for profit organization dedicated to promoting the development of the Asian-American community. For more information about the Lunar New Year Festival or QARI, please contact QARI at 617-472-2200 or visit www.qari.info.