



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## University Settlement's ROAR: Rejoice! Organize! Activate! Reclaim!, a summer festival taking place in Chinatown and the Lower East Side, will host press conference on May 2nd

ROAR: Rejoice! Organize! Activate! Reclaim!, a festival hosted by University Settlement, will take place every weekend May - August 2022 on New York City's Lower East Side and in Chinatown.

*Please join us for a press conference kicking off the initiative:*

**When:** Monday, May 2 at 10 am

**Where:** Sara D. Roosevelt Park, at Stanton Street, between Chrystie and Forsyth (South of Houston Street Playground)

Speakers:

- **Melissa Aase**, CEO, University Settlement
- **Jo-Ann Yoo**, Executive Director, Asian American Federation
- **William T. Castro**, Manhattan Borough Commissioner, NYC Parks Department
- **Brian Chen**, Chief Strategy Officer, Chinese-American Planning Council
- **Kenny Chen**, Program Manager, Health & Social Services, Asian Americans for Equality
- **Li-En Chong**, Co-Founder, The Yellow Whistle Campaign
- **Mae Lee**, Chinese Progressive Association
- **Doris Ling-Cohan**, bKind bOne; retired Justice of the New York State Supreme Court
- **Ada Lin**, Program Coordinator, Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF)
- **Coss Marte**, Founder, Conbody
- **Veronica Wong**, Advocacy Director University Settlement

Esther Yang, a Protect Yourself instructor from bKind, will lead a self-defense demonstration.

This summer, ROAR will:

- Energize public spaces including Sara D. Roosevelt (SDR) Park
- Celebrate the people and cultures of Chinatown and the LES in the year of the Tiger
- Increase connection, well-being, and joy in our neighborhoods

As the festival ramps up this May, interested community members are invited to stop by the ROAR booth at the Stanton Street walkway every Saturday from 12-5 PM. ROAR programming will also take place every Saturday beginning May 7th:

- **May 7<sup>th</sup>** - Older Adults ROAR! 189 Allen Street, 10 am - 2 pm
- **May 14<sup>th</sup>** - ROAR in Community! SDR Park Bike Polo Court, 12 pm - 5 pm
- **May 21<sup>st</sup>** - Kids ROAR! SDR Park Houston Street Playground, 12 pm - 5 pm
- **May 28<sup>th</sup>** - ROAR as One! SDR Park Bike Polo Court, 12 pm - 5 pm

ROAR programming will take place every Saturday and Sunday beginning on June 4.

A full event schedule will be released on June 1<sup>st</sup> on [www.roarwithus.nyc](http://www.roarwithus.nyc). Activities will include self-defense classes, Tai Qi, story hours for children in four languages, workout classes including Zumba and yoga, pop up art performances, ballroom dance classes, know your rights workshops, traditional Chinese music, and more!

#### **Neighborhood organizations participating in ROAR include:**

- Anti Violence Project
- Asian American Arts Alliance
- Asian Americans for Equality
- BioBus
- bKind
- Catholic Charities Community Services
- Chinatown NNORC
- Chinatown YMCA
- Chinese American Planning Council
- Chinese Progressive Association
- Conbody
- Design Trust for Public Space
- FabNYC
- Fiesta with Flor
- Good Old Lower East Side, Inc.
- Grand Street Settlement
- HOLLA
- Immigrant History Initiative
- Immigrant Justice Corps
- Jadis
- Loisaída, Inc.
- M'finda Kalunga Garden
- Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs
- New Yorkers for Parks
- Sara D Roosevelt Park Community Coalition
- The Tenement Museum
- The New York Immigration Coalition
- Untapped Storytellers and artist Yuko Kudo
- Yoga with Maisah

"It's time for us to get together again," said **Melissa Aase**, *CEO of University Settlement*. "After years of isolation, and with violence and harassment targeting our AAPI neighbors on the rise, our neighborly connections and spaces need some love and attention. Community is the answer. We need to walk together, exercise together, make art together, dance together, learn together, grow together - we need to ROAR together, collectively revitalizing our neighborhoods!"

“ROAR is for everyone who wants to build connections with their neighbors in Chinatown and on the Lower East Side – we’ll have events for kids, for adults, and adults over sixty, and events will be offered in English, Cantonese, Spanish, and Mandarin,” said **Ivan Fajardo**, *ROAR Program Coordinator, University Settlement*. “We are thrilled to partner with organizations across these vibrant neighborhoods to bring joy and community back to our shared public spaces.”

ROAR is funded by the State of New York State Department of State.

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## **About University Settlement**

University Settlement partners with 40,000 New Yorkers on the Lower East Side and in Brooklyn every year to build on their strengths as they achieve healthy, stable, and remarkable lives. For over 135 years, we’ve collaborated with our neighbors to pioneer highly effective programs that fight poverty and systemic inequality. Established in 1886 as the first Settlement House in the United States, we bring the values of that movement into the 21st century by meeting New Yorkers where they live, listening deeply to all perspectives, engaging with every individual holistically, and creating space for people to organize. Joining together with our neighbors to advocate for justice and equality, we help build community strength.

We work with New Yorkers of all ages. We infuse a commitment to civic engagement, equity, and communal action into each of our programs, which include early childhood education, mental health and wellness, benefits assistance and eviction prevention, adult literacy and education, healthy aging, community and recreation centers, performing and visual arts, and youth development.

Learn more at [www.universitysettlement.org](http://www.universitysettlement.org).