



PRESS RELEASE

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University Settlement and more than 40 community partners present **ROAR: Rejoice! Organize! Activate! Reclaim!**, a festival taking place in Chinatown and the Lower East Side this summer

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.

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

ROAR will bring more than 200 hours of free community-building programming, all of which will be offered in Cantonese, English, Mandarin and Spanish, to SDR Park and local residents.

ROAR programming will take place every Saturday beginning May 7th, and every Saturday and Sunday beginning on June 4th. ROAR events on May Saturdays include:

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

As the festival ramps up, interested community members are invited to learn more about the festival on its website, RoarWithUS.nyc, which is presented in Traditional Chinese, Spanish, and English, or by stopping by the ROAR Info Booth at the Stanton Street walkway every Saturday from 12-5 pm.

"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!"

"The Asian American Federation (AAF) is thrilled to join our friends from University Settlement to celebrate the ROAR festival in Chinatown and the Lower East Side, said **Jo-Ann Yoo**, *executive director, Asian American Federation*. "After leading the sad work of mitigating the violence and harassment against our beloved communities these past years, we look forward to experiencing joy – and filling these welcoming and familiar spaces with art, beauty, dance, and the laughter of our grandmas and grandpas, children and families of all colors coming together in safety and friendship."

"The Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC) is excited to partner with University Settlement and other community organizations on ROAR," said **Wayne Ho**, *President and CEO of CPC*. "The social, economic, and psychological impacts of the pandemic have been especially challenging for our neighbors in Chinatown and the Lower East Side, so ROAR provides a much-needed space for our community to reconnect, heal, and thrive together in solidarity. We look forward to embracing, engaging, empowering, and ROARing alongside our community throughout the summer!"

"The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF) has always been focused on uplifting, supporting, and strengthening our communities and our connections to each other. Much of our recent programming has a specific focus on racial healing – which we define as being able to see ourselves as whole beings, and fostering a sense of care and connectedness to people both within our community and across communities of color," said **Anita Gundanna and Vanessa Leung**, *co-executive directors, CACF*. "University Settlement's ROAR Festival puts healing back into the hands of our community as we gather together to celebrate being together after being apart for much of the last two years. CACF is appreciative of University Settlement's continued partnership and we are proud to be part of this critical and unifying work."

"We at Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE) are excited to stand in unison with University Settlement and so many other dedicated community organizations for ROAR," said **Jennifer Sun and Thomas Yu**, *AAFE's co-executive directors*. "Chinatown and the Lower East Side have a long history of uplifting community, collaboration and our shared cultures. As we emerge from the pandemic, there has never been a more important time to reconnect in our neighborhoods' treasured public spaces."

"We are pleased to join University Settlement and the other organizations in ROAR," said **Mae Lee**, *executive director of the Chinese Progressive Association*. "Sara D. Roosevelt Park has always been a space for all in Chinatown and the Lower East Side to connect and work together. ROAR is a much needed now, given the social, health, and economic impacts of the pandemic. So we look forward to ROARing with our neighbors this summer. We are all in this together"

"I am thrilled for University Settlement's ROAR festival this summer," said **New York Assemblymember Yuh-Line Niou**. "In a time of rising hate and fear, we must value the opportunities we have to celebrate together as a community. ROAR is a fantastic opportunity to showcase what makes Manhattan great: friends and neighbors coming together to share cultures, connect with each other, and enjoy our public spaces."

"I am pleased to join University Settlement and its community partners in celebrating ROAR, a dynamic summer festival that celebrates the people and the cultures of Chinatown and the Lower East Side," said **State Senator Brian Kavanagh**, who represents Chinatown and the Lower East Side. "This year, we also celebrate the Year of the Tiger – a sign that has traditionally represented strength, resiliency, and bravery. These traits have been especially evident in these communities over the past two years. The resiliency and the incredible mobilization among the residents of this community to support and care for each other serves as an inspiration for all New Yorkers. I urge my fellow New Yorkers to come out and join us in celebrating the beauty and pageantry of this festival with food, music, and cultural traditions. As we continue to live and work through the pandemic, and strive to keep our communities healthy and safe, it's more crucial than ever to come together and enjoy these moments of celebration."

"The Lower East Side and Chinatown have been through so much these past few years, and the effects of the pandemic will be deeply felt for years to come," said **Christopher Marte**, *New York City Council Member, District 1*. We are a resilient community and while we are working hard to bounce back, we must also take time to replenish our energy and celebrate each other. That's exactly why I am excited to join with such great community partners for the ROAR festival."

The Sara Roosevelt Park Community Coalition said, "We, and our community and partners, remain determined to have a park where all people are greeted as an opportunity for friendship and caring across every divide. We will continue to advocate for all resources we know are necessary to create a safe, beautiful, resilient, joyous, and welcoming neighborhood park - a park of peaceful coexistence in our complex city. We have worked hard for many generations here to have the community we would all wish to live in, and it is the only kind of community we will accept."

"To protect ourselves, we need to proactively come together, speak up, be heard, and help each other. The Yellow Whistle campaign stands for strength and safety together, because we belong," said **Li-En Chong**, *Co-Founder, The Yellow Whistle campaign*. "University Settlement was one of the very first organizations to partner with us; today, TYW is in all 50 states with over 200 non-profit partners. University Settlement is an organization that truly embodies these actions and values, which is why we are proud supporters of ROAR."

"ROAR is exactly what our community needs right now," said **Lisa Mehos and Doris Ling**, *bKind*. "We are thrilled to partner with University Settlement as we collaborate to overcome obstacles, support one another, and promote a shared vision of inclusion, diversity, and achievement."

"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."

Neighborhood organizations participating in ROAR include:

- Anti-Violence Project
- Asian American Arts Alliance
- Asian American Federation (AAF)
- Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE)
- Bio Bus
- Bkind
- Catholic Charities Community Services
- Chinatown NNORC
- Chinatown YMCA

- Chinese Progressive Association (CPA)
- Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC)
- City Relief
- Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF)
- CONBODY
- Design Trust for Public Space
- Flor Bromley
- Fourth Arts Block NYC
- George Tsz-Kwan Lam
- Good Call
- Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES)
- Grand Street Settlement
- Henry Street Settlement
- How Our Lives Link All Together (HOLLA)
- Immigrant History Initiative
- Immigrant Justice Corps
- ImmSchools
- Infinite Movement
- Jadis
- Latin American Intercultural Alliance
- Loisaída, Inc.
- Mencius Society for the Arts
- M'finda Kalunda Garden
- Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA)
- Museum of Chinese in America
- New York Immigration Coalition
- New Yorkers for Parks
- Office of NYS Senator Brian Kavanagh
- Sara Roosevelt Park Community Coalition
- Send Chinatown Love
- Stanton Street CSA
- Tech Kids Unlimited
- Tenement Museum
- The Performance Project @ University Settlement
- The Yellow Whistle
- Think Chinatown!
- Untapped Storytellers and Yuko Kudo
- Yoga with Maisah
- Yuan Lin

A full event schedule will be released on June 1st on 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!

ROAR is honored to co-host the world premiere of *Family Association*, a new interactive GPS-enabled soundwalk by The Performance Project Artist in Resident, **George Tsz-Kwan Lam**. Listeners will be invited to explore Manhattan's Chinatown while listening to the voices of the Chinese-American community, alongside music inspired by their testimony. *Family Association* is co-presented by The Performance Project at University Settlement and Music at the Anthology (MATA), and is supported in part by a Faculty Impact Fund grant from the Faculty of Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University.

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.