



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 27 2023

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Get Ready to ROAR: University Settlement and More Than 40 Community Partners Present a Summer Festival

New York, NY – University Settlement is thrilled to announce the return of its summer festival [ROAR: Rejoice! Organize! Activate! Reclaim!](#) Taking place every Saturday from July 8th to August 12th 2023, this vibrant event will energize the public spaces in New York City's Lower East Side and Chinatown with an array of captivating activities, cultural celebrations and free gifts.

ROAR aims to energize public spaces, celebrate AAPI people and culture, and increase connection, well-being, and joy in Chinatown and the LES. With violence and harassment targeting our AAPI neighbors on the rise and after years of isolation, our neighborly connections and spaces need some love and attention. The festival will strengthen the bonds within our neighborhoods and create lasting memories for all attendees.

The festival will run from 11 am – 3 pm every Saturday this summer beginning on July 8th and concluding on August 12th. The north side of Sara D. Roosevelt (SDR) Park – between Rivington and Houston Streets – will serve as the central hub where local residents can find ROAR events.

This year, an impressive lineup of over 40 free community-building programs awaits visitors, with activities and services presented in Cantonese, English, Mandarin, and Spanish. The Stanton Building in SDR Park will be the focal point, featuring diverse cultural performances on the main stage. Surrounding the area, our partners will offer engaging activities for all ages, including workout classes, ballroom dancing, calligraphy workshops, chess competitions, and children's art workshops. A talented balloon twister artist will be found in the Houston Street playground.

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 in Sara D Roosevelt Park every Saturday from 11 am – 3 pm. You can scan the QR code at the info booth, take a questionnaire, and spin our prize wheel to win some ROAR swag. Prizes include tote bags, tumblers, sunglasses, keychains, and toy bears.

"The connections ROAR forges between neighbors on the Lower East Side and Chinatown are invaluable to empowering and protecting the community," said **Mark Levine**, *Manhattan Borough President*. "ROAR's multicultural, multifaceted programming is a visionary, unifying approach to reclaiming and activating local space, and building stronger relationships."

"We're looking forward to another summer full of community and connection - and we hope that all our neighbors in Chinatown and the Lower East Side will stop by to join in the fun," said **Melissa Aase**, *CEO, University Settlement*. "Many thanks to our elected officials for their support of ROAR, as well as to all of our community partners, without whom the event couldn't take place."

"The Sara D. Roosevelt Park is a vital outdoor space that connects our Lower East Side and Chinatown communities," said *Congressman Dan Goldman*. "The ROAR Summer Festival brings incredible resources to underserved communities and celebrates the vibrant people and cultures of both Chinatown and the LES. I am excited to see the return of the festival and appreciate the efforts of University Settlement and our community partners in making this amazing festival series a reality."

"Our coalition has worked in partnership with leading local community anchor University Settlement since our founding almost forty years ago. CEO Melissa Aase and staff have never failed to offer a vision of a better future and then they back it up with the work to make that happen," **K Webster**, *President of the Sara D. Roosevelt Park Community Coalition*. "With other generous organizations and people here, ROAR will brighten our summer, provide resources, fun, involvement, and a reminder that this public park is our backyard, summer get-away, and public meeting space. We intend an offer of welcome to all while aiming to create a safe haven in this environmental justice area."

"Houston Street Center is honored to play a key role in this year's ROAR Festival, through weekly ballroom dance workshops that feature the instructor and students in our Senior HeART program, and a Zumba performance by youth and young adults with developmental disabilities in our EXCEL Program," said **Adam Blackman**, *Director of Houston Street Center, University Settlement*. "In reclaiming and activating SDR Park, this one-of-a-kind summer festival aligns with Houston Street Center's mission to provide opportunities for all ages to Organize and Rejoice."

"The NYPD 5th Precinct Auxiliary Police is delighted to participate in community gatherings and events, offering our dedicated volunteers to ensure the safety and enjoyment of everyone involved," said **David Tam**, *NYPD Auxiliary Police Inspector*.

"The Performance Project at University Settlement is thrilled for the return of the ROAR Festival and the great events it will bring to the Chinatown and Lower East Side communities. We look forward to supporting ROAR and being part of this new summer

tradition," said **Emma Rivera**, *Space and Production Manager, The Performance Project @ University Settlement*.

"The Chinatown Partnership is delighted to welcome another series of fun activities by ROAR and their team members, in these unusual times, it is great to see the community coming together to collaborate and work together as we look forward to celebrating with them this summer," said **Wellington Chen**, *Executive Director of Chinatown Partnership*.

"We are delighted that University Settlement will again organize the ROAR event to engage this diverse community in Chinatown and LES. After a long pause due to the pandemic, our community certainly will benefit from this meaningful event," said **Gabe Mui**, *Adjutant of American Legion Lt. B. R. Kimlau Chinese Memorial Post 1291*.

"University Settlement Adult Literacy Program runs free 10-month long English language classes for adult immigrants in New York. We were thrilled to hear that ROAR is back for its second summer because though it's summer break, we know our students are still in the city looking for new opportunities to practice their English language skills and new ways to connect with nearby communities," said **Lucian Leung**, *Program Director, Adult Literacy Program, University Settlement*. "As a program manager, I am glad ROAR is back because since the pandemic, we haven't been getting as many walk-in inquiries about our English classes. The fact that this festival is held every Saturday at our nearby park can help us recruit more potential students for our adult English language classes."

"We are excited to announce that as part of our participation in the ROAR Summer Festival, we will be providing complimentary Chinese learning textbooks at the event. This reflects our commitment to promoting the understanding of Chinese heritage, arts, and culture through Chinese language learning. Our primary objective is to empower the youth by equipping them with the necessary skills to utilize Chinese as a Second Language, thereby expanding their horizons and opportunities," said **Jennifer Wang**, *Principal, New York Chinese School Principal*. "Since its establishment in 1909, the NY Chinese School has remained dedicated to providing Chinese language education to both the local Chinese communities and individuals interested in exploring the Chinese language and culture."

Documented is thrilled to participate alongside several local, community-powered peer organizations in ROAR's celebration of increased belonging across and within communities seeking summer-time joy in LES and Chinatown. Our newsroom helps build empowered and connected immigrant communities here in NYC by providing actionable, community-relevant news and information in our community of readers' preferred languages and formats, said **Mazin Sidahmed**, *Co-Founder & Co-Executive Director at Documented*.

"Community correspondents Rommel H. Ojeda, serving Spanish-speaking immigrants, and April Xu, serving Chinese-speaking immigrants, look forward to engaging with and learning from community members at our listening-first photo booth, in addition to sharing Documented's language-specific resource guides designed to promote self-advocacy and knowledge-building."

"VNS Chinatown NNORC is the long-term community partner with University Settlement and fully supports ROAR! It is our honor to participate in the meaningful festival on the 2nd year! Let's work together to make a difference in our community," said **Helen Sit**, *Manager, Chinatown NNORC*.

"The bKind team is honored to join University Settlement for the second year of ROAR as we continue to promote safety and solidarity while celebrating our city's rich, diverse heritage from which we all draw our resilience, creativity, and beauty, said **Lisa Mehos**, *bKind* and **Doris Ling-Cohan**, *bKind bOne initiative*.

"Situated in Chinatown, our institute focuses on teaching self-defense techniques while also promoting Chinese Culture and philosophy to the Western community. It brings us great pride to contribute to and perform in the ROAR event organized by University Settlement. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to University Settlement for hosting this significant event, providing the residents of Chinatown and the Lower East Side with a summer filled with joy and lasting memories," said **Tony Chuy**, *Chief Instructor of Praying Mantis Martial Arts Institute*.

"We're proud to support and be able to participate in the University Settlement ROAR event by providing Lion Dance and Martial Art performance," said **Wing Hong Yip**, *founder of Dragon Style Kung Fu and Tai Chi Club*. "Established in 1974 during the global kung fu craze, Yip's Dragon Style is dedicated to teaching traditional Chinese martial arts for improved health and self-defense. Our training integrates martial morality, empowering individuals to excel in all aspects of life with integrity."

"University Settlement is committed to changing the trajectory for people on the Lower East Side and in Chinatown, empowering them and increasing their access to opportunities for success. On behalf of JPMorgan Chase, we are so proud to partner with them, provide financial health workshops and ensure everyone, from youth to senior citizens, has the skills and knowledge to take charge of their lives and achieve their goals," said **Wendy Velazquez**, *Vice President, Community Manager, Lower East Side, Chase*.

"Rendr is honored to join the ROAR Summer Festival hosted by University Settlement. We are the leading primary care-focused, multi-specialty medical group dedicated to providing world-class, value-based healthcare to the underserved Asian community in New York City. Through our participation in this event, we aim to enhance community awareness, understanding and discover better healthcare services by providing valuable health-related resources. We extend our best wishes for the success of this event!" said **Cherie Huang**, *Project Manager, Rendr*.

"The NYP Lower Manhattan's Chinese Community Partnership for Health brings healthcare professionals into Chinese communities in Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn to help residents overcome language and cultural barriers and address unmet medical needs.", said **Ada Wong**, *Program Manager, Chinese Community Partnership for Health (CCPH), NewYork-Presbyterian Lower Manhattan Hospital*. "CCPH is a unique program that has been

educating and supporting the Asian American community for over 30 years and we're happy to participate in this important community event. The purpose of our program is to encourage people of all ages to live a healthy lifestyle, take steps to help prevent and fight chronic disease, and maintain physical and mental health."

"We are pleased to once again participate in the ROAR Festival this summer. This festival is a fun, grassroots community effort bringing together the diversity of Chinatown and the Lower East Side. This year, you'll see us at the festival with information and activities for people of all ages to promote civic engagement, voting, Asian American Pacific Islander history, and more", said **Mae Lee**, *Executive Director, Chinese Progressive Association*.

"It is my privilege to be entrusted with the responsibility of orchestrating and organizing this remarkable event by connecting the vibrant communities of Chinatown and the Lower East Side," said **Faye Qiu**, *Project Manager, University Settlement's ROAR Festival*, "I envision ROAR 2023 as an influential catalyst that will bridge the gap between these two historic neighborhoods, nurturing deeper bonds and cultivating a collective sense of joy among both residents and visitors."

Neighborhood organizations participating in ROAR include:

Alliance for Positive Change
Allure Group
American Legion, Lt. B. R. Kimlau Chinese Memorial Post 1291
Anti-Violence Project
Apex for Youth
Asian American Federation (AAF)
Bilingual Birdies
BKind
CAIPA (Coalition of Asian-American IPA)
CAMS (Chinese American Medical Society)
Charles B. Wang Community Health Center
Chinatown Partnership
Chinese Culture Art Association
Chinese Progressive Association
CONBODY
Documented
EmblemHealth
Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield
Empowerment of Asian Americans
FABnyc
Goles
Happy Music DJ
Healthfirst
How Our Lives Link All Together (H.O.L.L.A.)
Immigrant History Initiative

Immigrant Justice Corps
Jade Ling Long Dancing Team
LANtern® (Lupus Asian Network)
LiveOnNY
Loisaida Center
M'Finda Kalunga Garden
Museum of Chinese in America
New York Chinese School
NYP Lower Manhattan Hospital – Chinese Community Partnership for Health
NYPD 5th Precinct
New Yorkers for Parks
New York-Presbyterian Lower Manhattan Hospital - Kress Vision Program
New York-Presbyterian Gracie Square Hospital
Ninja Ballet
NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs
Praying Mantis Martial Arts Institute
Rendr
Public Justice
Sara D. Roosevelt Park Community Coalition
Send Chinatown Love
Stanton Street CSA
VNS Health
Wing Hong Yip Dragon Style Kung Fu
Yellow Whistle
YMCA

A full event schedule will be released on July 8th on RoarWithUS.nyc. Stay tuned and get ready for the fun!

ROAR is funded by the 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.