

Chinese culture on display

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The essence of Chinese culture will be showcased later this month at the Living Arts Centre.

Mississauga Chinese Arts Festival co-chair Amber Ing says residents will be exposed to many aspects of Chinese arts and culture that will show how multiculturalism enriches the community.

Speaking this morning's at a festival preview, Ing says residents can expect a variety of foods, dance, arts and crafts, the traditional lion dance, tai chi, chess and ping pong demonstrations at the annual festival that's now in its fifth year.

"There will be a coach to introduce martial arts ... not just the fighting, but the philosophies behind it and for them to learn not just strength, but (how to) mentally train yourself," she told The News.

Organizers expect the festival, which is run by the Mississauga Board of Chinese Professionals and Businesses, will attract 15,000 people. It runs Aug. 30 from 11 a.m.-9:30 p.m. and Aug. 31 from noon to 8 p.m.

This year's festival is designed to encourage the younger generation get involved and connect with their culture. It will include a talent show and singing contest that will features young performers from across the city.

"We would like to promote the young people ... and bring out their talent," she said. "We want to give them opportunity to come together and also train and help them to be able to bring out their leadership skills to carry on the arts."

Festival admission is free both in and outside the LAC.

Both days there will be a ping pong exhibition featuring elite junior players from across Canada. Visitors can challenge the table tennis stars and receive some coaching from Yong Qiang Luo, the former provincial coach of Guangdong Province in China and the former coach of Saskatchewan's table tennis teams.

On Sunday, the art of Chinese Tea, martial arts, cultural dances, tai chi and sword dances will take centre stage, followed by a special performance from 7-9:30 p.m. called When East Meets West in the RBC Theatre. The Toronto Chinese Orchestra will perform traditional music from the east while professional singer and performer Don Choi and friends will sing pop songs from the west. Tickets for this performance range in price from \$15-50. Call 905-828-6800.

The festival continues Monday with martial arts and cooking demonstrations, a talent show and the singing contest.

For a complete list of festival programming, visit www.chineseartsfestival.com.

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Take a bow. The 2009 Mississauga Chinese Arts Festival will be held Aug. 30-31 at the Living Arts Centre. The festival will include a fundraising effort for victims of the recent typhoon in Taiwan. Here, Mississauga members of the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation Canada introduce themselves at today's festival launch. *Staff photo by Rob Beintema*