

The Patriot Ledger

In Quincy, thousands celebrate August Moon Festival

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QUINCY — Coddington Street in Quincy Center was shut down Sunday for a celebration of the harvest and the moon as symbols of prosperity, happiness and harmony in Asian culture.

Put on by Quincy Asian Resources, Inc., the Quincy August Moon Festival is in its 31st year. What originally started as a small event, held in a parking lot and run by only a few people has become one of the largest August Moon festivals in the Northeast.

“I remember when this was in a parking lot. I’ve organized about 10 of these in my life, and it’s really grown as a community, and the August Moon Festival is a reflection of our changing city of Quincy as well as our growth and contributions to the community,” state Rep. Tackey Chan, a founding member and the former president of Quincy Asian Resources, said. “It’s been a long time since I had to do this with three people ... now we have hundreds.”

Those hundreds of people include high school students from the local community helping to run the event, with more than 20,000 attendees estimated to come out to enjoy the day's celebration. Brightly colored lanterns, paintings, sculptures and flowers decorated Coddington Street, which was filled a colorful maze of vendor booths, food trucks and various activities.

The highlight of the day for many festival-goers was the traditional Dragon Dance and Lion Dance, performed by students at Quincy's Wah Lum Kung Fu & Tai Chi Academy. The dances are common at festive Asian celebrations and symbolize good luck and prosperity.

Performers danced on the lawn outside of Quincy High School, holding brightly colored flags and waving the poles of the fabric dragon figurine to bring the creature to life. Students dressed as lions, some holding another performer on their shoulders inside the costume, weaved in and out of the crowd to the beat of the drums. The performance ended with the lion "spitting," or the dancers throwing lettuce, which symbolizes wealth and luck, and tangerines, symbolizing longevity, into the crowd, as viewers erupted into cheers.

Emma and Randy Montgomery of Boston came out to the festival specifically to see the day's performances.

"We found a link on the City of Boston website, and we were very interested in the demonstrations, especially with the Dragon Dance and the Lion Dance," Emma Montgomery said.

Other performances included traditional martial arts demonstrations, a group playing the Taiko drums, dance groups and music from local bands and DJs.

Activities in the children's area at the festival included crafts like paper lanterns, mooncakes, kites and paper flowers, as well as a petting zoo and pony rides. For many children, including Sofia Ngyuen, a 7-year-old from South Boston, the highlight of the day was the bouncy house.

Throughout the grounds of the festival, a wide assortment of food was available, from pizza, hamburgers and traditional carnival food to Thai, Vietnamese, Indian and Mexican cuisine.

“We went right to the food, all we’ve done is eat so far,” said Kelly McCollagh, a Brookline resident, “The food is great.”

At its heart, the August Moon Festival is a chance for the community to come together and share a celebration while learning more about one another.

Katie Marcus, a pediatrician from Newton, came out to the festival to get to know the areas where her patients live.

“I want to get to know some of the neighborhoods that our patients are coming from to help me get to know the people themselves better,” Marcus said.

For members of the Asian community, the day is a chance to share their culture and traditions with the rest of the community.

“We want people who live in this area to know about what this is, this amazing festival,” said Quincy Asian Resources volunteer Victor Zhen of Quincy. “It’s a celebration of one of our most important festivals and it’s a traditional, cultural day we can share with everyone.”