



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**California Dragon Boat Association Presents  
The 22nd Annual Hong Kong - Northern California International Dragon Boat Festival  
September 23 & 24, 2017, Saturday and Sunday: 10am - 5pm**

**Largest Competitive Dragon Boat Festival in the United States to Celebrate 20th Anniversary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region**

**Nearly 130 Teams from around the Globe Take Part in World Class Competitive Races as Colorful 40-foot dragon boats Take to the Waters of Oakland's Lake Merritt**

**Weekend Includes Full Scale Family Friendly Festival, Special Cultural Arts Performances and Leading Food Vendors**

**This Year's Festival Presents The New Sports Zone at Dragon Land Powered by Net Generation with Bay Area Professional Sports Teams, Kids' Activities and More!**

**Two-Day Fest is Open to the Public with Free Admission and Free Bart Shuttle Access**

**[www.sfdragonboat.com](http://www.sfdragonboat.com)**

August 28, 2017– Oakland, CA: The 22nd Annual Hong Kong- Northern California International Dragon Boat Festival ([www.sfdragonboat.com](http://www.sfdragonboat.com)) returns this Fall on **Saturday & Sunday, September 23 & 24 from 10 am- 5 pm each day at Oakland's beautiful Lake Merritt, the 2<sup>nd</sup> year at its new location.** Presented by the [California Dragon Boat Association](http://www.sfdragonboat.com), audiences will once again be treated to the spectacular fleet of colorful 40-foot dragon boats as they race to the beat of Chinese drums. This year, the

Festival will also honor the 20th anniversary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) with special cultural programs throughout the weekend and a Hong Kong dragon boat team participating in the races for the first time in its history.

At the heart of the **Hong Kong - Northern California International Dragon Boat Festival** is the thrill and excitement of the races. Hundreds of dragon boat teams comprised of thousands of paddlers, ranging from novice teams to competitive caliber racers throughout the U.S. and visiting teams from across the globe, come together for two days of world-class racing.

The two-day fest also features a full scale family festival with a vast array of special cultural arts performances, such as lion dancing, martial arts, Taiko drumming, with, leading food vendors, merchandise booths and family-friendly activities. *Dragon Land* - a "kids zone" pavilion, dedicated to a myriad of programming for families will return this year with activities including arts & crafts, games & prizes, obstacle courses, science experiments and more.

This year's Festival will also present the new ***Sports Zone at Dragon Land powered by Net Generation*** with Bay Area professional sports teams participating, **Details to be announced closer to date.**

"The City of Oakland is thrilled to host the Hong Kong - Northern California International Dragon Boat Festival for its 2<sup>nd</sup> year at Lake Merritt," said Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf. "Last year was truly inspiring to see so many families and audiences of all ages coming together to share in the experience of this deeply rooted and inspiring cultural tradition. We look forward to welcoming back returning guests and inviting new audiences to enjoy this year's Festival, located at one of Oakland's most beautiful destinations."

"We are thrilled to return to Oakland's Lake Merritt for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Hong Kong - Northern California International Dragon Boat Festival," says Linda Cheu, Festival Director for the California Dragon Boat Association, the organization that sponsors the event. "Lake Merritt, is not only a stunning locale to witness world class racing, but also offers the opportunity for audiences of all ages to enjoy this unique and special event." Cheu adds, "The Festival has become one of the most beloved, family friendly events in the Bay Area. We are so excited to be bringing this experience to new audiences once again to Oakland for our 2017 Festival."

"We have supported the Hong Kong - Northern California International Dragon Boat Festival for many years, and are particularly proud to be the title sponsor of this year's 2017 Festival," says Ivanhoe Chang, Director of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, San Francisco. "As Hong Kong celebrates the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), we are presenting special events throughout the western part of the U.S. We are excited to include this signature sports event as part of the celebration and welcome, for the first time, a dragon boat team from Hong Kong to participate in this year's races at Lake Merritt."

**Opening Ceremonies:** The festival kicks off with its opening ceremonies on Saturday, September 23 at 11:30 am with a traditional blessing of the festival boats ceremony, a traditional Chinese ceremony accompanying dragon boat races all over the world for thousands of years. Buddhist monks from the Oakland based Fa Yun Chan Temple community will help awaken the dragons and bless the racing and will be joined by lion dancers and the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir singing the National Anthem.

**Transportation:** There will be free Dragon Boat Shuttle transportation all day from nearby parking garages and BART stations. Details will be available on the Festival website at [www.sfdragonboat.com](http://www.sfdragonboat.com)

### **About Dragon Boat Racing**

Dragon boating is a 2,500-year-old sport, originating in Southern China and is one of the fastest growing international team water sport throughout the world. Each year, race festivals are held around the globe in Asia, Australia, Canada, Europe and the United States, with the **Hong Kong - Northern California International Dragon Boat Festival** as one of the largest festivals in the United States. The Dragon Boat Festival is one of three major holidays celebrated in Chinese communities around the world. A dragon boat team consists of 20 paddlers, a drummer, and a steersperson, and is heavily reliant on timing and teamwork. There are no “stars” in dragon boating, as the success of the boat depends upon how well the team works together.

### **About the Hong Kong - Northern California International Dragon Boat Festival**

The Hong Kong -Northern California International Dragon Boat Festival is organized by the California Dragon Boat Association (CDBA). It is the largest competitive dragon boat festival in the United States, regularly hosting close to 130 teams from all over the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia. The Festival, held at Lake Merritt, is a major event in the Bay Area, and is distinctive from other community festivals and Bay Area sports events in its unique blend of cultural heritage, athletic competition, and festival programming and is one of the largest events for the Asian American community.

### **About California Dragon Boat Association**

The California Dragon Boat Association (CDBA), founded in 1996, promotes strong, healthy communities in the Bay Area through high quality dragon boat programs. All proceeds from the festival benefit the nationally recognized CDBA Youth Dragon Boat program, which promotes teamwork, leadership, cultural awareness, and health and fitness among high school youth through a yearlong dragon boat program offered at Bay Area high schools and youth organizations. The program has been particularly successful at reaching immigrant youth who have typically been underrepresented in traditional school sports. Additionally, dragon boating is very accessible from both a cost and physical needs perspective. The CDBA provides the boats, sites, equipment, and coaches necessary to learn dragon boating. It is also very physical accessible, which has led to the development of many cancer survivor and sight impaired teams.

### **About the 20th Anniversary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region**

In 2017, Hong Kong celebrates the 20th Anniversary of her return to China and the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The "one country, two systems" principle is the bedrock of Hong Kong's stability and future. Since 1997, Hong Kong has continued to prosper, full of dynamism and opportunities, and has grown in importance in the international area. The city has not only maintained its position as a global center for finance, trade and business, it has developed new areas for economic growth such as creative and cultural industries, innovation and technology, testing and certification, education and training, and legal and arbitration services.

Looking ahead, Hong Kong is primed to grasp new opportunities that are emerging in Asia and around the world. Building on its strengths and ever deepening ties with Mainland China, the city is moving ahead with ambitious plans for its economic, financial and societal development. Mega infrastructure projects are under construction. New towns, business districts and sports and cultural facilities are also being completed in phases, to enhance the lifestyle of residents and make Hong Kong more convenient and appealing for tens of millions of tourists who visit Hong Kong each year.

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