

## HSArts Community Newsletter - Jan 20

Brian Nieh • 10 days ago • Friday, Jan 20 at 12:00 PM • **San Francisco High School of the Arts**



**San Francisco High School of the Arts Community Newsletter | January 20,  
2023**

**FROM THE ADMINISTRATION**

### Important Dates

**Jan 20** Full-time CNY Dumpling Celebration Dinner

**Jan 23** Chinese New Year - School Closed

**Jan 27** HSArts Community CNY Celebration

### Remarks from our Head of School



Greetings everyone!

We start the new year 2023 with great success. Soon the Year of the Rabbit, there are many things we look forward to this year. Our HSArts Community Chinese New Year Celebration, many performance and competition opportunities these two months, and the high school trip to Taiwan in March. Let's have a fruitful and fun Year of the Rabbit! Go Phoenix!

- Dr. Sherry Zhang

Head of School

San Francisco High School of the Arts

### What does Chinese New Year mean to you?

*Mr. Brian Nieh, an 'ABC' (American born Chinese) with very Asian parents*

It may just be another holiday where you get a day off from school to some. However, for many Chinese (and Asian) families, this is the biggest holiday of the year; bigger than Christmas and Thanksgiving and Labor Day combined.

This holiday is based on the lunar calendar's 1/1, as opposed to the Gregorian calendar more widely adopted. The lunar calendar follows the cycle of the moon, which is why CNY shows up on different dates depending on the year. Curious what your "lunar birthday" is? There are a handful of websites that will calculate it for you, including [this site](#). *Apparently my birthday is May 4, 4686. So either I'm reallllly old if it's B.C. or a time-traveler? Let's...get back to the holiday...*

For two weeks, families travel for however far they live to join together and feast, similar to Thanksgiving. They celebrate family, being together, family ancestry and respect for elders. Also, there's loads of food. It's typical to prepare **10 fancy dishes**, which include **fish** (魚 yú sounds like 餘 'surplus', and there's a saying 年年有餘 nían nían yǒu yú, 'wishing to have a surplus at the end of the year', *ask your Chinese teachers for more details*), **dumplings** (they are shaped like ancient silver ingot bars, so eating them will bring you fortune), and **chicken** (雞 jī, which sounds similar to 吉 meaning 'good luck' or 'prosperity'). Best part: if you don't finish it, you take a break and then continue eating after.

During the two week celebration, there are several customs, such as **hanging lanterns** (which ward off bad luck), adopting a **kumquat tree** (in cantonese, kumquat is *gam gat sue*, where *gam* 金 is the word for 'gold' and *gat* sounds like 'good luck') **lighting fireworks**. **Hanging door couplets** and **other red things** at your door is said to ward off the dreaded 'nían' monster, which terrorized small villages during new years, until a monk passing through taught the villagers to scare off the monster using fireworks and the color red, like an anti-bull, before the monk finished it off using his magical powers.

But really, most people know Chinese New Year for the wonderful tradition of red envelopes 紅包 hóng bāo. The older generations were tasked with giving red envelopes filled with money (or coal if you've been bad), as long as the younger generations show filial piety and respect to their elders, and of course saying the magic words:

恭喜發財，紅包拿來

gōng xǐ fā cái, hóng bāo ná lái

Wishing you good luck and good fortune, now hand over the red envelope.

(alternatively, if you're cantonese, you can say *gong hei fat choy*)

While *unfortunately* we may not celebrate for the full two weeks, we have 3 separate days of celebration to enjoy, including our full-time dumpling celebration dinner, no school on Monday, and our HSArts Community CNY Celebration next Friday. Hope to see you all there! 新年快樂 xīn nián kuài lè!

## ACADEMICS

### ***Featured Academic News of the Week***

*Mr. David Gallagher, English Teacher*

Aiden Wong from our 8th grade has been crowned champion of the first annual 2023 San Francisco High School of the Arts Spelling Bee held last Friday in the school library.

Lurid (an adjective defined as very vivid in color, especially so as to create an unpleasantly harsh or unnatural effect) was the winning word that bolstered Aiden to victory in the tournament judged by Mr. Randazzo, Ms. Ogden, who also was our pronouncer, and Mr. Gallagher, who was also the recordkeeper. As our registered school champion, Aiden will now be invited to an online test to qualify for the San Ramon Valley Rotary Regional Spelling Bee. The online test will be available from February 10th to the 17th. It will be a 50 item test, with 25 spelling and 25 word meaning questions.

The top 35 scores will then be invited to compete at the regional spelling bee. The champion of the San Ramon Valley Rotary Regional Spelling Bee will advance to the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington D.C.

All of our students in grades 5-8 participated in the bee and the competition was both riveting and fun. Coming in second place was Andy Ispas from 7th grade and our third place contestant was Lucas Luu from 5th grade. Congratulations Aiden and all of the students who participated and showed their passion for spelling.

## ARTS

## **Featured Arts News of the Week**

*Mr. Brian Nieh, Arts not-Teacher*

*Before we start, I'd like to give an editor's/arts coordinator note regarding our upcoming CNY Celebration and performance:*

At the start of each semester, our choreographers are very eager to start their new programs. However, at the same time, we have two major celebrations in the Mid-Autumn Festival and Chinese New Year. Both of these typically include a performance, so this is where things get tricky: what programs do we do?

For the CNY celebration next week, we can certainly run back some of the Winter Wonders programs, many of which our students are performing for other community CNY celebrations (including at Commodore Sloat ES UCSF, and the Sunset Farmers' Market). But as the artists we (students and teachers) are, despite the time frame, we're hard at work choreographing and preparing a few new pieces for you all to enjoy.

Now pivoting back to the original planned topic: **Chinese Dance as a Celebratory Tool**

Chinese dance has been around for centuries in different forms and used for different purposes. More often than not, Chinese dance is used for celebrations. It can take the form of court dances for imperial officials to celebrate holidays or birthdays or a great piece of legislation. More widespread, it surfaces in all different ethnic groups, doing ethnic dances to celebrate a harvest or whenever they just want to have some fun. Several of our dances from Winter Wonders fall into this category, including Snow-Capped Celebrations (celebrating their reverence to the heavens) and Flower Hats (celebrating their beautiful hats).





So next Friday, we hope to celebrate with a few Chinese Dance pieces during the CNY Celebration performance, including a special piece to send off the year of the tiger.

## ***ADMISSIONS***

## ***Admissions News***

Wednesday, February 15 - **Middle School Open House** (In Person Event), 6:00-7:00 pm

Geared primarily to students entering 5th grade and middle school, join us to learn more about our Middle School programs and curriculum. Register [here](#)!

HSArts will continue to provide private campus tours over the next several weeks giving all interested students and their families the opportunity to further explore our programs and offerings. Please RSVP here to schedule your tour.

## ***MSSONS***

### ***YOUNG ARTISTS***

#### ***Young Artists News of the Week***

*Ms. Hanna Zhang, Young Artists Director and Dance Teacher*

Happy Chinese New Year to all of our Young Artists Families!

This season, we're scheduling several dates for open classes and auditions for our Young Artists program and Summer intensives. Mr. Wei, Ms. Dana, and myself, Ms. Hanna, will host these classes for anyone interested, both current students and those not yet enrolled in our program. For those especially talented, there may be scholarship opportunities available.

If you are interested, or you'd like to bring a friend along, please email Ms. Ginnie at [enrollment@hsarts.org](mailto:enrollment@hsarts.org). See you there!

### ***STUDENT LIFE***

***You are invited!***  
***But please RSVP***

## **Exciting Plans for CNY Celebration**

Our **student councils** are excitedly preparing for the upcoming CNY celebration, next Friday. The **high school student council** is planning to sell several drink and dessert items, so make sure to bring some extra cash to enjoy the delectable treats. For our **middle school student council**, they hope to entertain with several games and activities. We encourage you to check them out and support our student councils in their extracurricular efforts!



If you didn't catch that, you can  
**RSVP here.**



## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Coming soon!**

- Jan 20** Full-time CNY Dumpling Celebration Dinner
- Jan 23** Chinese New Year - School Closed
- Jan 27** HSArts Community CNY Celebration

Communication is essential and we strive to connect with our students, parents, and families throughout the school year. We will continue reaching out to you with this weekly newsletter. We also encourage you to visit our website and follow our social pages including Facebook and Instagram for announcements, information, and celebrations.





1-20-2023