

# Welcoming the 'Rabbit'

Local residents celebrate the start of the Chinese New Year

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Area residents rang in the Chinese New Year Saturday at the Sky View Mall in Flushing, welcoming the 'Year of the Rabbit' with food, family and fun.

"That's what celebrating New Year's is all about," said Jan Lee, a spokesman from Chinatown Community Young Lions Club, which performed at the event.

This year's celebration featured live dance, free food, giveaways and a charity raffle.

"It really reminded me of home," said David Huang, a recent transplant from Taiwan to New York.

The Chinatown Community Young Lions Club, a group promoting Chinese culture through the teaching of the traditional Lion Dance, was the featured performer at the yesterday's Sky Mall celebration — a tremendous honor for everyone involved, according to Lee.

"We're so happy to give back to the community, especially the children in our club from this area," he said.

The Lions Club wasn't the only group excited about giving back to Queens residents.

Ken Konfong, Sky View Center general manager, said he was thrilled that his facility was the host of "such a wonderful event."

"It really is a nice way for us to interact with the local community," Konfong said.

The Chinese calendar is based on a combination of lunar and solar movements, with Saturday's New Years celebration ushering in the 'Year of the Rabbit,' which officially began Feb. 3.

Cuddly, warm and affectionate, the Rabbit augurs a year of good fortune, according to Kye-Li Chen, a spectator at the mall.

"The rabbit is one of the luckiest signs in the Chinese Astrology chart," Chen said.

"Though he is also mysterious and occasionally over cautious. Still I am hopeful for a good year ahead."