



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**COLORADO DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL CONTINUES TO BRING THE LARGEST AANHPI CELEBRATION IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION TO SLOAN LAKE PARK**

DENVER, CO — The Colorado Dragon Boat Festival, a staple summer event in the Denver community, will return to Sloan’s Lake Park on July 22 and 23, 2023. The park will be filled with dragon boat races, great food, an Asian marketplace, endless entertainment and thousands of members of the community gathering for this AANHPI (Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander) celebration.

“We are the LARGEST AANHPI celebration in the Rocky Mountain Region! We had an estimated 170K attendees last year” says Sara Moore, Executive Director of Colorado Dragon Boat. “It is a testament to how supportive Coloradans are to ensuring a safe space for culture and diversity. It gives the community a sense of hope and happiness to see all these people who come out to support and learn about our AANHPI communities and cultures.”

With over 40 teams racing, 25+ food vendors, 60+ marketplace vendors, and plenty of performances — the festival is bound to have something for everyone. This fenced in event is free to attend, but donations are always welcome to support the operations and programming of our 501(c)3 nonprofit.

***2023 Colorado Dragon Boat Festival Opening Ceremony***

Join us on Saturday, July 22nd, starting at 9:45 am for the official opening of our Festival!

Unique to the Colorado Dragon Boat Festival, we open the event with Shaolin Hung Mei Kung Fu parading its 75-foot long, colorful, traditional Chinese Dragon throughout Sloan’s Lake Park, the Dragon’s presence symbolizing chasing away “negative energies” sending good luck, good fortune and a safe day of racing to all of the race teams, vendors and attendees. When passing by Team City, competitors will line up behind the Dragon and follow as it passes by the Band Stage where teams will be introduced.

After the welcoming addresses, a storyteller will present the history and culture behind Dragon Boat racing followed by a Buddhist Monk and congregation chanting, offering a formal blessing for the event. The Monk, congregation, and dignitaries will then form a procession, following the Dragon to the shoreline where a ceremonial purification and “eye dotting” will take place.



Per cultural norms, “dotting” the eyes, nose, ears and so on of the Dragon Boats awakens the boats’ “senses” – sight, smell, hearing... and imbues the boats with the spirit of life helping to ensure a safe day of racing. Stick around after the “Eye Dotting” is complete and watch the 75-foot-long Dragon twist and turn as it performs a spectacular, traditional Chinese Dragon Dance.

### ***Dragon Boat Racing!***

Come watch as our teams participate in the fast-paced dragon boat racing competition with two full days of racing. The colorful Flag Catching- Taiwanese-style boats are back by popular demand. Each Boat will have 18 paddlers, one drummer and one flag catcher. Head to the finish line to witness the exciting moment that the flag catcher has to lean out and grab the flag to help win the race!

We will also have the Hong Kong style division. On this slimmer, sleeker boat, they travel faster on the water. Each Boat will have 20 paddlers. These are the boats and style of competition you will see in international races and possibly soon, the Olympics!

Come cheer on your favorite team!

### ***Let’s talk FOOD!***

Festivalgoers can satisfy their appetite with culinary delights from all of Asia and the Pacific at both of our Taste of Asia Food Court. Food vendors will showcase an abundance of mouthwatering Asian cuisine from all over Asia and the Pacific! There is something for every palate. An added bonus is that your money goes directly towards helping these LOCAL restaurants come back to life after the pandemic.

### ***Shop til you Drop!***

Attendees can shop to their heart’s content at our Asian Marketplace full of unique, one-of-a-kind arts, crafts and vendors similar to those found in the open-air street markets all over Asia. New the past few years, our Asian Craft Tent! Come check out all the amazing crafters who are part of this year’s festival. Also make sure to stop by the CDBF Merchandise store to get all your festival swag and to support CDBF!

### ***Kanpai! Ganbei! Geonbae! Cheers!***

We are the hottest festival of the summer! Figuratively and literally! Make sure to stay hydrated throughout the day by purchasing water, soda, and beer at our festival beverage centers! Each beverage center is manned by LOCAL NONPROFITS who use our festival as a fundraiser! For every dollar you spent on a beverage, that will go directly back to the nonprofit and Colorado Dragon Boat.

### ***Feel the Asian Beat***

Get your toes tapping and your body dancing at our 3 Performance Stages which will feature traditional and contemporary Asian and Asian-American instrumental, vocal, choral and dance performances by well-known local artists. Performances included: Japanese Taiko drumming by Denver Taiko, Halau Kalama, and Indian-fusion dancers, Mudra Dance. This is an interactive dance you do not want to miss!



### ***RepresentASIAN through Art***

Our festival is all about representASIAN. Here we celebrate the amazing contributions and accomplishments of the AANHPI communities right here in Colorado. Back by popular demand are our live art demos that showcase local AANHPI artists in the community. This year we will be able to see the amazing work done by Casey Kawaguchi, Ratha Sok, Grace Gee, Bakemono 0504, and more!

### ***Education and Empowerment***

The past few years have been very difficult for the Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander community due to the increase of hate and racism plaguing our nation. We believe that the best way to fight back against injustices is education and empowerment! Come check out the section of our marketplace that will host local AANHPI nonprofits and organizations to learn more about how you can help and become an ally!

For more information, visit <https://cdbf.org>. Additional volunteer opportunities are available for those interested in getting involved!

### **Festival Facts:**

**What:** 2023 Colorado Dragon Boat Festival, a family-friendly celebration of Colorado's rich Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander heritage. This year we are celebrating the Year of the Water Rabbit (Year of the Cat in Vietnamese culture).

**When:** Saturday, July 22, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday, July 23rd, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Where:** Sloan's Lake Park (West Side) – 25th Avenue and Sheridan Boulevard, northwest Denver

**Cost:** FREE Admission

- *Please note that it is a fenced in festival to help with safety. There will be bag checks as you enter the festival so, please be sure to leave all unauthorized items at home!*

**Transportation:** We encourage all attendees to use Lyft/ Uber, or bike/walk to get to and from the festival. **There is NO PARKING onsite at the park.**

**Who's Invited:** EVERYONE!



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**About Colorado Dragon Boat**

*Colorado Dragon Boat is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization advocates for the Asian American Pacific Islander communities through our three programs: the Colorado Dragon Boat Festival, the Colorado Dragon Boat Film Festival, and the AAPI Emerging Leaders Program. For more information please visit our website at [www.cdbf.org](http://www.cdbf.org).*