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Various cultures to be showcased at Asian-American Festival

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Posted: Sunday, May 29, 2016 12:01 am

Tulsa Asian-American festival

11 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday

Martin Regional Library, 2601 S. Garnett Road

tulsalibrary.org/asianfestival

By ISABEL DOBRIN World Staff Writer | 0 comments

Hundreds of families will celebrate the growing number of Asian cultures present in Tulsa through traditional music and dancing, authentic cuisines and colorful crafts.

The Tulsa City-County Library's 14th annual Asian-American Festival, set for 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday at Martin Regional Library,

2601 S. Garnett Road, will showcase traditions and customs from China, Japan, India, Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia and Vietnam, among other countries.

The festival was created as a way to showcase cultures that have grown significantly in east Tulsa, festival Chairman Jason Patteson said.

"In the last few years, there have been more Asian markets come along and a lot more education," Patteson said. "It's a very multicultural area."

Martin Regional Library is a great example of that, he said.

"At any one day, you might run into 10 or 11 languages spoken," he said. "Everything from Spanish and Korean all the way down to Maori or Burmese."

The library's children's area will serve as the festival's main performance area for Japanese drumming, traditional Japanese sword fighting, a world fusion dance ensemble featuring a blend of Middle Eastern belly dancing and Indonesian folk dancing, Korean fan dancing and a community orchestra.



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The festival will also feature an Anime viewing room, a Japanese tea ceremony, a Tai Chi demonstration and a display of children's artwork from Kyoto, Japan, Tulsa's sister city.

Outside the library, Sushi Train will serve Japanese and Korean food while Lone Wolf Banh Mi will serve Vietnamese and French fusion food.

Several commercial and informational booths will be at the festival, including the YWCA's immigrant and refugee services program, the East Asia Institute and the Tulsa Go Club.

Rex Burnett, director of the East Asia Institute at OU's College of Arts and Sciences, said the festival is a great way to explore rich and often mysterious cultures.

"It's a good opportunity to look at all the other Asian cultures that are there and to realize what a large Asian community there is in Tulsa," Burnett said. "Culturally, it's important to show how diverse Tulsa has become."

The institute, which provides professional development for teachers to learn about East Asia and integrate East Asian culture and language into lesson plans, will demonstrate calligraphy techniques and offer Chinese zodiac stamps to kids at the festival.

The festival provides several opportunities for kids to learn, Burnett said.

"I grew up where there was no exposure to Asian culture, and it's kind of a new concept," Burnett said. "I think it's the most important thing."

Isabel Dobrin 918-581-8325

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