

22 May 2008

**Chinese Welfare Association**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**ANNUAL CHINESE DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL in aid of Sichuan Earthquake Appeal**

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> of June**

**10:30am - 4:30 pm at the Lagan Watersports Centre**

The Chinese Welfare Association is pleased to be organizing the 2008 Chinese Dragon Boat Festival at the Lagan Watersports Centre, 2 Riversedge 13 Ravenhill Road, on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> of June at 10:30 am.

This event will be a unique day out for all the family, whether participating in the rowing of the lively dragon boats, partaking in the Chinese work-shops, or simply watching the exciting race on the river Lagan.

Teams, ranging from statutory agencies, voluntary organizations to community groups will be competing against each other to be the fastest dragon boat. The event will kick off with the blessing from the traditional Chinese lion dance.

Eileen Chan-Hu, Chief Executive of Chinese Welfare Association says ‘**We are delighted to celebrate this festival along the River Lagan in Northern Ireland and to join in the Dragonboat celebrations happening across the world where Chinese communities have settled. The event will bring people together from all sectors to take part or spectate. We encourage all communities to come together at this event to support our combined efforts in donating to the Sichuan Earthquake Appeal.**’

The proceeds of the event will be donated to victims of the recent devastating earthquake that struck South West China on 12 May, 2008 which has led to thousands of deaths and the destruction of many homes.

**Additional information**

- The Dragon Boat festival dates back to ancient times and occurs on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month. Originally a religious practice, it is now purely recreational. The Dragon Boat festival celebrates the death of the poet [Qu Yuan](#), who drowned himself in the 3rd Century BC as a protest against a corrupt government. The legends are that the town’s people attempted to rescue him by beating drums to scare fish away from eating his body and threw rice dumplings into the river to tempt the fish away from their hero.
- Pyramid shaped glutinous rice cakes known as zongzi are eaten to mark the festival, and along the rivers and coasts dragon-boat races are performed. In these

high-spirited competitions long, sleek boats with dragon heads on the prow are propelled by teams of rowers stroking their oars in unison.

- Chinese Welfare Association, the main regional community organisation for the Chinese community will be part of a group of many Chinese groups (Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Oi Kwan Womne's Gorup, Mandarin's Speakers Association, Sai Pak Chinese Community Project, Derry and others) across Northern Ireland who have come together in fundraising to support the Sichuan Earthquake Appeal

**For further information please contact Jonny Ashe (Youth Worker), or Sofia Botzios (Community Relations Officer) 028 90 288 277**