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**NORTH SUBURBAN
YMCA**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**“Taste of Asia” Festival Celebrates Asian Pacific American Heritage
At the North Suburban YMCA**

Northbrook, IL: May 2014 – The 2014 “Taste of Asia” festival, held on Sunday, May 18 at the North Suburban YMCA, attracted well over 1000 guests to celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. Presented by the Northbrook Community Relations Commission, the festival highlighted the diversity and richness of Asian culture through food, art, music, dance, and martial arts demonstrations.

The main exhibit space bustled with color, activity, and the scent of delicious food as guests toured art exhibits and watched live performances. Among many acts, the audience enjoyed Taiwanese folk songs from the USA Midwest Hakka Chorus, a Chinese Dragon Dance from the CCEA Chinese Language School, Tahitian/Polynesian dancing from Moku’aina Hula, and martial arts demonstrations from the North Suburban Y. In a unique cultural experience, the festival presented a mock wedding to demonstrate the traditions of Bangladesh. Young people had the opportunity to create traditional Chinese paintings or to have their hands painted with henna designs.

Outside the hall, guests toured the Y’s Community Gallery which features a month-long exhibit of Asian-style art by Jan Keller Schultz and Zhaoyu Vance Wan. This extensive exhibit, showcasing Schultz’s sumi-e ink paintings and Wan’s calligraphy-inspired artwork will remain on display through the end of May. Their artwork is available for purchase, with a portion of proceeds benefiting the North Suburban Y.

Commission member Sue Huang, who served as chairperson for the Taste of Asia celebration, looked forward to the event’s continuing growth. “I am very happy with the turnout,” said Huang. “I hope that we are able to provide even more variety in activities from different ethnic groups next year.”

“Taste of Asia has become a wonderful tradition for the entire community,” noted Howard Schultz, NSYMCA Executive Director/CEO. “The Community Relations Commission does a wonderful job of bringing together a diverse, exciting mix of performers and vendors that reflects the talents of our local Asian-American community. The Y is glad to be part of this meaningful, unifying event.”



Photo 1 Caption: The Taste of Asia Festival at the North Suburban YMCA included performances from a variety of Asian and Pacific Island cultures, including Tahitian/Polynesian hula dancers.



Photo 2 Caption: Poonam Shaikh (center) portrays a bride in a demonstration of Bangladeshi wedding traditions.

About the Northbrook Community Relations Commission

The Northbrook Community Relations Commission was established by the Village of Northbrook to foster and promote understanding, mutual respect, cooperation and positive relations between and among all residents of Northbrook, to the end that a sense of shared community among residents is strengthened, the value of each individual is affirmed and the constitutional rights of all are realized. The Commission sponsors a wide range of public events throughout the year. Monthly meetings are held at the Northbrook Public Library. For more information, contact Jason Batelden, 847 272 5050 or visit <http://www.northbrook.il.us/CRC>.

About the North Suburban YMCA

The YMCA is a not-for-profit entity and relies on donations to make services available for all families and individuals in its 15-city region. All board members are volunteers, who donate their time, talents and financial resources. Located at 2705 Techny Road in Northbrook, the YMCA has served the northern suburbs of Chicago for over 45 years. The Y is about youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility, providing programs and services that address the needs of our diverse community and are accessible to all. For more information or to make a donation, contact Barb Flanagin at 847-272-7250 or bflanagin@nsymca.org, or visit www.nsymca.org.