

Residents and Clients Ring in Year 4708



While thoughts of romance, cupid and Hallmark cards are synonymous with February 14, Asian communities all over the world rang in the year 4708 during the Lunar New Year Festival. In honor of Chinese residents and clients, Metropolitan Jewish Geriatric Center (MJGC) and Metropolitan Jewish Adult Day Health Center (Adult Day) commemorated the centuries-old tradition on Thursday, February 16 and Friday, February 19, 2010, respectively.

In MJGC's solarium, performance group Ju Wei Ye and friends helped residents and staff celebrate the year of the tiger. Attendees, including clients from Adult Day, enjoyed a rousing performance of traditional songs and dances from China and the United States, such as the "Lion Dance" and "America the Beautiful."

The lion dance is a traditional number performed by two people wearing an elaborately decorated lion's head and tail. The head, eyelids and mouth of the lion move rapidly in unison with the music; the tail (body) follows suit and is said to sweep away bad fortune from the past year.

Over at Adult Day, seniors were treated to a medley of performances by clients from the Jewish Community Center of Brooklyn, a social model senior center. The group skillfully executed a number of pieces complete with colorful costumes, including the "Chop Stick" and "Umbrella" dances.

Not to be left out, Adult Day's senior choral group sang a few selections for the crowd. Later, some clients literally flexed their muscles—showcasing what they learned during tai chi and chi gong activities.

According to Director of Adult Day Dolores Schiele, "We want our clients to have the opportunity to take part in festivities and celebrations that help keep them active, as well as are reminiscent of their younger years and life-long traditions."

"Maintaining a culturally diverse atmosphere at MJGC is very important to staff and our residents, which is why events like these are vital," said Deshauna Appleton, Assistant Director of Recreation.

According to Chinese legend, the annual celebration of New Year started with a fight against a mythical beast called Nian—"year" in Chinese—who was extremely ferocious. Nian lived at the bottom of the sea and on New Year's Eve, climbed out of the water to devour people and animals. The villagers eventually realized Nian was afraid of the color red and so they began wearing red clothes, hanging red lanterns and lighting firecrackers. The story is still told to help explain the importance of red.

People born in the year of the tiger are said to be natural leaders who are authoritative, courageous, emotional and intense. Some famous people born under the fierce zodiac sign include Queen Elizabeth II, Jay Leno, Leonardo DiCaprio and Lady Gaga, to name a few.

The zodiac signs rotate on a 12-year cycle. 2011 will mark the year of the rabbit

