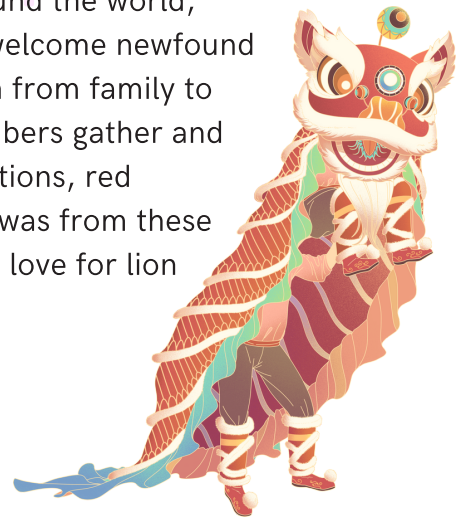


Rawr

Anthony Pham

The burst of firecrackers jolted my senses and signaled the beginning of the Lunar New Years' lion dance. I grasped onto my lion costume and simply let the beat of the drums playing around me take over my body. The thoughts and ideas in my head gracefully transformed into one cohesive movement as I mimicked the movements of a lion to bring good luck and fortune for all.

Lunar New Year is one of the most observed holidays celebrated around the world, uniting all generations of Asians together. It is the season where we welcome newfound prosperity, good luck, and triumph, with cultural traditions passed on from family to family. Every year since I was young, I have watched my church members gather and celebrate this special holiday with delicious ethnic food, lively decorations, red envelope gift-giving, and my favorite activity of all — lion dancing. It was from these memorable times with my community every year that I developed my love for lion dancing.



Lion dancing has not only helped me feel connected to my Vietnamese roots, but also become something that I enjoy doing in my free time. It's my personal way of bringing happiness and love to my community and represents a perfect balance of my cultural upbringing and identity.

Every time I lion dance through the fiery smoke and cheering audience, I concentrate on my artistic movements as the world around begins to fade. I leave my fears and worries behind and focus on placing my heart and passion into bringing joy to others nonverbally through this upbeat traditional cultural dance.