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On Feb. 20, Radford University's Chinese Club held their annual Chinese New Year Celebration. The show reigned in over 100 audience members to enjoy performances celebrating Chinese culture. The performances featured students from Virginia Tech, the Blacksburg Chinese School, and performers from the 15-50 Dance Group, among others.

For the first time in 16 years, the celebration was held in Radford University's prestigious Covington Performance Hall.

"I'd really like to give a huge thanks to President Penelope Kyle for allowing us to use to Covington space," said Dr. I-Ping Fu, professor of Chinese and the faculty advisor for RU Chinese

Club.

Previously, the event had been held in the foyer outside the Covington building, but it would often become too crowded as the celebration gained popularity throughout the years. In order to utilize the Covington Performance Hall space, Fu personally requested permission from President Kyle.

The Chinese New Year Celebration is an event that brings the New River Valley community together to celebrate many great aspects of Chinese culture. It provides a platform for Chinese Americans in the area to display their culture while also providing students a great way to learn about the Chinese culture.

“The Chinese New Year is the biggest holiday in Asia,” said Fu. “And we have so many resources around us such as the Blacksburg Chinese School and the Evergreen Choir, it’s wonderful to be able to bring them in and celebrate together.”

The show began with a performance of the traditional lion dance followed by Chinese dance, the performance of traditional Chinese music, and even a display of the Chinese yo-yo.

While many of the performers were of Chinese American background, there were many other performers from different and diverse backgrounds - including Fu’s Chinese class students whom performed a Chinese song titled, “The Little Apple.”

John Burke, a senior who studied Chinese under Fu and is President of the Chinese Club, said that learning about the Chinese language and culture has opened up many doors for him.

“Experiencing other cultures helps you understand your own a lot better,” stated Burke.

The director of International Education, Paul Currant, states that one of his main goals is to help internationalize the school through events like the Chinese New Year Celebration. He states that it is important for Radford University to impact as many students as they can, so that others can have the same experience that students like Burke have greatly enjoyed.

“Gone are the times of not needing to know other cultures,” stated Currant. “It’s important for people to know that there are many different ways of eating, dancing, speaking.”

A Blacksburg Chinese School parent agreed with Currant.

She stated, “It’s an increasing trend for parents to teach their children a second language. Events

like this one and the classes offered at Blacksburg Chinese School are a great opportunity for these children to learn about different cultures and languages, which is so important in today's globalized environment."

"For us, Chinese New Year is what thanksgiving is to Americans," said Claire Chung. "It's a tradition to get together with your family and celebrate."

Chung, from Blacksburg High School, performed a dance titled "Transformation." She truly enjoyed her time performing and appreciated the opportunity that Radford University was able to provide her with.

"It's so important to know about myself, my family, and my culture. I loved performing this at my high school and it's great to be able to bring it back and share it with more people," said Chung.

Every year, the Radford Chinese Club hosts celebrations for the Chinese New Year and the Mid-Autumn Festival in efforts to showcase the many aspects of Chinese culture to students and the community.