

EVENT RECAP



HP CULTUREFEST BRINGS THE WORLD TO HIGHLAND PARK

BY RESIDENT ESTHER KIM CHOI

On a bright and breezy afternoon, the heart of Highland Park transformed into a global village as neighbors gathered for the highly anticipated **HP CultureFest**, an international festival celebrating the cultural heritage of families in our community. Hosted by HP CultureFest and powered by the dedicated volunteer efforts of local families, HP CultureFest once again delivered a vibrant and unforgettable experience.

From the moment guests arrived, they were Greeted by the sights, sounds, and scents of cultures from across the globe. Flags from dozens of countries waved proudly, symbolizing the rich diversity that exists within Highland Park ISD's student and family community. The festival's mission—to showcase this diversity, foster global curiosity, and create a deeper sense of connection—was on full display.

Food, of course, was a major highlight. Festival-goers had the chance to sample homemade

and restaurant-partnered dishes representing every corner of the world, from fragrant Thai curries to traditional Argentinian empanadas, Turkish sweets to Japanese sushi rolls. Each bite told a story, made with love and steeped in tradition.

The energy of the festival was amplified by live performances of music and dance. Students and parents took the stage to share traditional dances, songs, and fashion from their ancestral homelands. From African drumming circles to Indian classical dance, from mariachi performances to elegant European waltzes, the performances drew big crowds and even bigger applause.

Beyond entertainment, the festival was educational and hands-on. Attendees could admire intricate fabrics and handmade art, explore cultural artifacts, and engage in interactive exhibits. Children and adults alike were encouraged to touch, ask, and learn—an invitation to “see into their world” and

come away with newfound appreciation for their neighbors' backgrounds.

A core aim of the event was also to **support local artists, restaurants, and businesses**. Many Highland Park entrepreneurs and creatives collaborated with the festival to offer services, samples, and products that reflected the spirit of the cultures being celebrated. Their participation helped reinforce a sense of unity between families, schools, and the business community.

More than just a festive afternoon, HP CultureFest was a meaningful experience that reminded everyone what makes Highland Park so special: the people, the stories, and the willingness to come together in celebration of something greater than ourselves.

As one parent volunteer shared, “We want our kids to grow up not just proud of their own heritage, but curious and respectful of others. This is how we prepare them to be global citizens.”

Mission accomplished, HP CultureFest. We already can't wait for next year.

For more information, visit hpculturefest.com.



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