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## Camp offers glimpse of Chinese culture

BY JENNIFER BRADSHAW • KEYPORT BUREAU • AUGUST 28, 2009

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At the Monmouth County Chinese Summer Camp, held this week at the high school, 72 kids ages 6 to 15 years practiced traditional Chinese dances, games and crafts.

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The main goal of the nonprofit camp, held every summer for more than a decade years, is to teach Chinese culture. It is sponsored by two local Chinese schools: The Fidelity Chinese School of Marlboro and the Jersey Shore Chinese School in Holmdel. Tuition is \$180 per child.

At the end of the week, campers performed the skills they had learned in a 90-minute program for family and friends, showing off impressive yo-yo tricks, kung fu moves and traditional Taiwanese dances such as the scarecrow hat dance and the lion dance.

Austin Huang, the camp's director and incoming principal of the Fidelity Chinese School, said three teachers were sent by the Taiwanese government for the week, helping guide the children in their studies.

The trio spent eight weeks in the United States, traveling to camps in multiple states. The Holmdel camp was their final stop, and they flew back to Taiwan Friday evening.

Camps apply for the teacher visits, but they are not always attained. When the teachers are sent, it is

a special occasion, Huang said.

Along with the teachers, the government sent props such as lion masks and fans for dancing, which the camp can keep.

Split into four classes, divided by age, many of the campers return year after year, said Ruth Lin, a teacher at the Marlboro school. That could be noted by the army of teaching assistants, all volunteering high school students, who had attended the camp when they were younger.

The camp is always held during the last week of August, and many, if not all the campers who attend are



Students learn about Chinese culture during a camp held at Holmdel High School. STAFF VIDEO BY THOMAS P....



Alice Lai (left), 9, Holmdel, and Noah Lee, 8, Marlboro, dance with masks during the Monmouth County Chinese Summer Camp at Holmdel High School Friday. (STAFF PHOTOS: THOMAS P. COSTELLO)

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students at one of the two Chinese schools, where they receive language and culture lessons on Saturdays.

"During the school year, they are only exposed to one cultural activity," she said. The summer camp gives them the chance to experience something new, that they may not have been studying, she said.

Grace Huang, 12, of Marlboro, has been attending the camp for three years, she said. She enjoyed making the crafts and practicing yo-yo tricks.

"I'm getting really good at it," she said.

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