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For immediate release

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China Lights Lantern Festival Announces Exclusive Preview Night *Intern, Volunteer Opportunities Too*

MILWAUKEE (July 11, 2018) — Organizers of China Lights, the wildly popular Chinese lantern festival at Milwaukee County's renowned Boerner Botanical Gardens, announced today the opening of Preview Night tickets sales as well as opportunities to work as interns and volunteers.

China Lights: Panda-mania is a cultural festival that will illuminate the nine-acre botanical gardens with 45 three-foot to three-story handmade lantern displays along a three-quarter-mile walking route. Lantern exhibits of panda habitat and three interactive displays will be among the new highlights at this year's festival. Also featured will be two stages for Asian folk-culture performances, a marketplace, and two dining areas with a variety of Asian and Western menu options. The show will run from Sept. 21–Oct. 21, at Boerner Botanical Gardens, 9400 W. Boerner Drive in Hales Corners, WI. Tri City National Bank is the presenting sponsor of the event, and WE Energies is the entertainment sponsor.

Tickets to the Exclusive Preview Night party, Sept. 19, from 6–9 p.m., include close-up parking, admission, three behind-the-scenes tours, a parade, two stage performances, Asian hors d'oeuvres and beverages, artisan craft demonstrations, a collector's premium, the mobile guide, and one VIP admission ticket for a return visit to the 2018 festival. A limited number of Exclusive Preview Night tickets are available for \$100 per person and are currently available online at chinalights.org. Beginning Aug. 8, the Preview Night tickets will also be available at the Boerner Botanical Gardens front desk between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.

To enrich the experience of festival-goers, China Lights will be hiring two interns to work in every aspect of event-planning management for two days per week during the full run of the festival. The schedule is

flexible. Applicants must be at least 18 years old and should have an interest in gaining experience in this industry. For more information, call 414-525-5628.

In addition, volunteer opportunities are available for Line-Minders, Docents, and Exit Guides. Positions must commit to two nights per week for the duration of the festival. Working two to three hours per night, Line-Minders will be greeting patrons, directing them to the appropriate admissions gate, and talking with them as they wait in line. Working two to four hours per night, Docents will guide visitors through the exhibits and provide background information on the displays. Docents may qualify for a stipend. Working three to four hours per night, Exit Guides will be thanking patrons and directing them to the shuttle stop or to the nearby lots. Each volunteer will earn two free VIP tickets to the festival and an invitation to the staff-appreciation party.

Other operational improvements to this year's show include priority-access tickets, which patrons purchase online and print at home; 10 fully-lit complimentary parking lots (first-come, first-served); and expanded complimentary shuttle service from four outer parking lots to the China Lights entrance.

Festival hours will be 5:30–10 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday. The event will be closed Mondays. China Lights admission tickets will be valid any night of the regular 2018 schedule.

On-line ticket sales will open Aug. 8, (8/8) at 10:08 a.m. Ticket prices are the following: Child, age 5-17, \$12; Adult, age 18-59, \$20; Senior, age 60+; one-visit individual VIP package, \$30; and unlimited-visit individual Season Pass, \$50.

For more information, call 414-525-5628 or visit ChinaLights.org

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BACKGROUND

For the past three years, Festival Pro LLC, a Milwaukee-based special-events producer, worked with the Sichuan Tianyu Arts & Culture, Inc., in cooperation with Zigong City and the Sichuan Provincial Department of Commerce, to bring the China Lights lantern festival to Milwaukee

In 2016, Milwaukee became the first Midwestern city to host the unequalled China Lights. In each of the past two years, more than 100,000 visitors attended the show, and, because demand for tickets was so great, sales were temporarily suspended.

As part of China's five-year economic plan, in 2015 the Sichuan Provincial Department of Commerce developed a campaign with the goal of holding 100 lantern shows in 100 cities worldwide to spread Chinese traditional culture and promote cultural exchange. The custom of lighting lanterns has occurred for thousands of years.

According to the Zigong Lantern Culture & Industry Group, Zigong City now boasts nearly 600 registered lantern-making companies with 40,000 employees.