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B.C.'s first dumpling festival bridges cultures through food



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COQUITLAM, B.C. - There will be mandus, wontons, baos, patties and raviolis, a sample of what's to be expected at the inaugural [B.C. Dumpling Festival](#).

On the surface, it's a food festival but its purpose is to fight racism by bridging cultures through dumplings.

"We're really promoting so many different cultures. And with dumplings, it's so multicultural, right? Every single country really has a dumpling...I think that's how we all connect with each other," explained organizer Gina Chong.

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Chong is not a festival organizer by trade; she's a small business owner and realtor.

She became involved in anti-racism work after facing an ugly encounter during the pandemic.

In April 2021, she and a friend were walking around Town Centre Park when a stranger asked them to help take her picture.

Chong said they declined because they didn't have hand sanitizer with them and were concerned about COVID-19, that triggered the woman to [go into a racist tirade](#).

"She said, 'COVID came from you. It came from your

country. Go back to China.' And that was quite shocking for us to hear," Chong said.

Since that incident, she founded the Asian Arts and Culture Society, which is putting on the dumpling festival.

Burnaby's On On Wonton House is one of the vendors at the event.

Mona Chan said elderly relatives experienced racial violence, in which one of them suffered a broken cheekbone, and they both are feeling pain months later.

It was a traumatizing event that has especially impacted her teenage daughter.

She said the dumpling festival has helped give them a voice and sense of empowerment.

"We're answering the call because of the fact that my daughter wants to make it known that we want to stand up for anti-racism and racial harmony," Chan said.

Her daughter made a cheeky bao called the "kick butt bun" to fight back against racism.

She said at one of the festival's smaller events, she saw the positive impact of the festival on the family.

"Yesterday night was the first time that I saw this face behind me," she said pointing at her daughter, "glow and smile and be proud of our ancestry....The B.C. Dumpling Festival is like Christmas in July for us."

Elimin8hate, a non-profit which strives for racial equity for Asian Canadians, said events like the B.C. Dumpling Festival can play a part in combating prejudice.

"We really feel that representation and quality and diverse representation is a great way to reduce systemic racism," said executive director Audrey Wong. "Repeated and ongoing exposure to Asian Canadians and Asian Canadian

“Ongoing exposure to Asian Canadians and Asian Canadian cultural norms in a non-threatening situation can normalize and familiarize people with Asian Canadians.”

Chong said she wants to make the B.C. Dumpling Festival an annual event, with smaller dumpling-making workshops throughout the year.

A GoFundMe has been set up to help the non-profit pay for security, tents, fences and other logistics.

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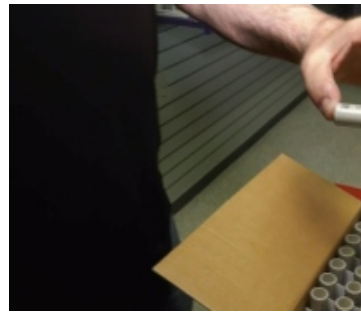
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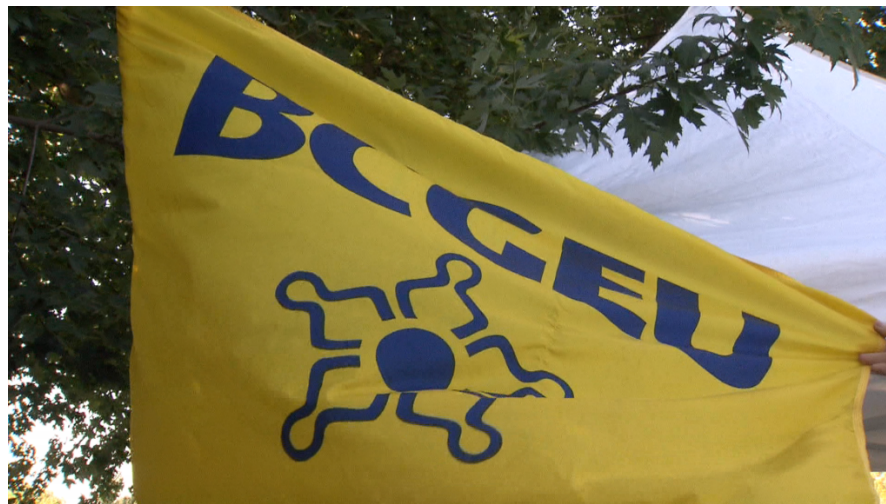
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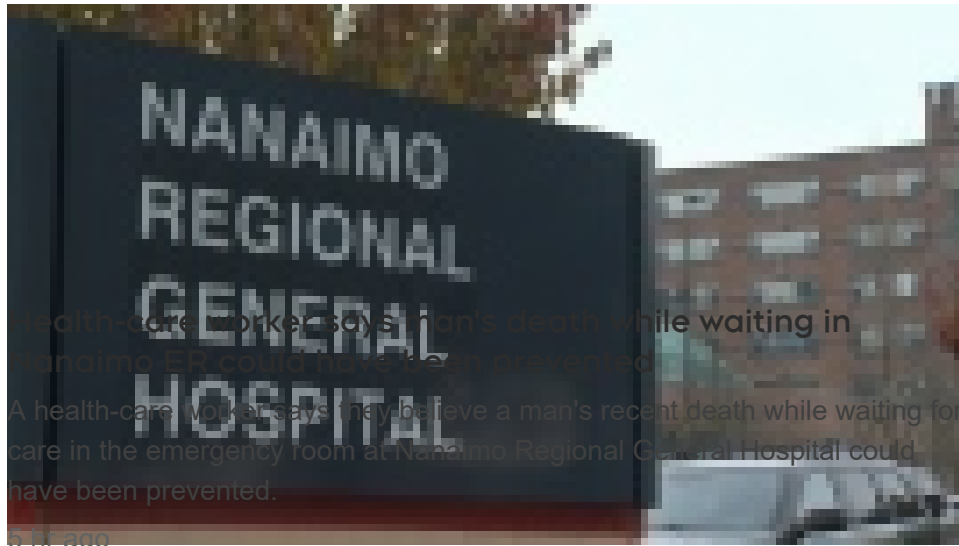
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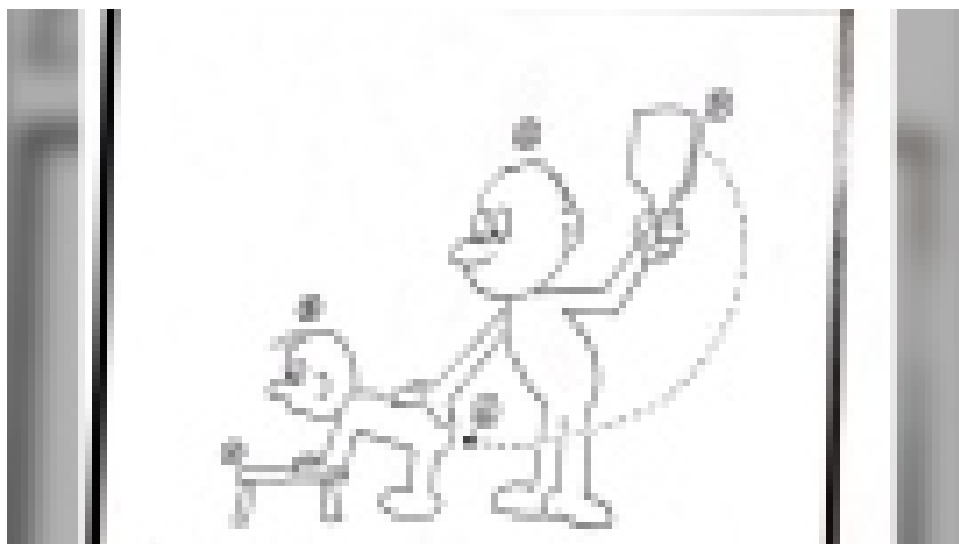
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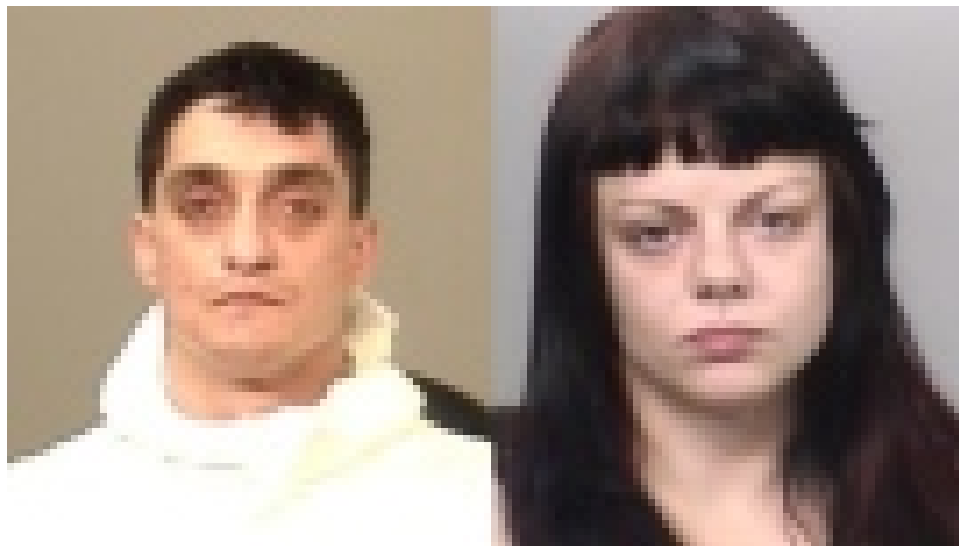
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