

Group plans \$12 million Chinese Cultural Center

The phases for the 4-acre site in Irvine include classrooms, a gymnasium and eventually a performing-arts center.

BY PEGGY GOETZ
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lowed by a gymnasium and finally, if fund-raising is successful, the centerpiece of the project, a performing-arts center.

In all, the classroom, auditorium and gym complex will cost \$8 million.

The group is about \$1.8 million short of that, but is confident it will be able to raise the money, said Diane Tang-Liu, the group's president. She said work will begin on the education building while

The South Coast Chinese Cultural Association said Tuesday that it will begin construction in the fall on a \$12 million Chinese Cultural Center to be built on a 4-acre site at Trabuco and Roosevelt roads in Irvine.

First phase of the cultural center will be a 20-classroom educational building, to be fol-

fund-raising continues for the gym.

The association bought the land last fall for \$4 million from the Irvine Co.

The cultural-center project is supported by donations from about 400 individuals, businesses and organizations. All of the facilities will be open for other groups' use.

"People from all segments of the community can use and enjoy it," said Tang-Liu.

The two-story, 83,223-square-foot education building will include a 300-seat auditorium, a terraced courtyard for outdoor events, and a tranquil-Chinese-style garden.

The attached gym will have space for a full basketball court, or three volleyball courts or seven badminton courts.

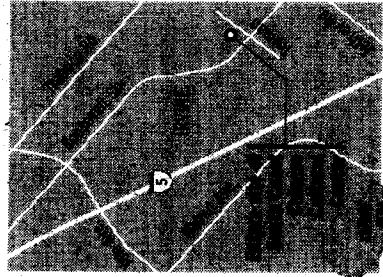
Plans call for a fold-up stage and seating for about 700. The proposed 12,597-square-foot performing-arts center will have about 540 seats.

For Irvine Mayor Larry Agran, the center helps fulfill his vision of Irvine as a multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-everything community.

"For me, this is a dream come true. We really are a global village here," Agran said.

The mayor referred to census data showing that the Chinese-American community in Irvine is about 15,000.

Up to 1,000 students now attend weekend classes in Chinese culture and Mandarin, the most widely spoken of the Chinese languages, at Uni-



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versity High School, where the group rents space.

The students are of Korean, Japanese, Malaysian, Vietnamese and European heritage. Students who attend the weekend language classes can earn high school language credits.

Classes in Chinese also are offered for adults at locations

MORE INFO
To learn more about the project, call Lisa Kuan at (949) 770-1567 or visit www.thechineseculturalcenter.org

elsewhere in the city. All that would be consolidated in the new center, which also would serve as a site for seminars, plays and musical performances.

The nonprofit South Coast Chinese Cultural Association counts 1,000 members, most of them in Orange County.

The association was founded in Irvine in 1976, a few years after the city's birth. Most of its "work force" is made up of volunteers with about 20,000 volunteer hours logged annually.

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