



**United Way
of Greater Toronto**

For Immediate Release

June 12, 2004

Blooming Success for United Way Chinese Community Hosted Gala Event

TORONTO – Toronto’s Chinese community was out in full force Saturday night for the 6th Annual United Way Blossom Ball. Over 900 guests packed the Metro Toronto Convention Centre and enjoyed an evening of fabulous entertainment, delicious food, and amazing auction items with proceeds benefiting United Way of Greater Toronto.

“We are happy to see continuing support from the Chinese community,” said Co-chair **Esther Fung-Yeung**. “The turnout was overwhelming and greatly exceeded our expectations.”

Organizers hope the gala will bring in \$330,000 for United Way’s 200 social and health service agencies, including 49 agencies which serve the Chinese community.

“The spirit of giving was clear from the crowd’s energy and enthusiasm,” said Co-Chair **John Man**. “It was definitely a night to remember.”

The Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra opened the night with the national anthem, and The Gift of Music string quartet filled the reception area. Miyabi Landscape Design and Construction along with Millie’s Flowers created a captivating Oriental Garden, which featured five silent auction galleries.

The silent auction featured more than 150 items, with a pair of return tickets to Hong Kong, over \$60,000 in jewellery, an electric massage chair, a 42” plasma TV and more. The Evasons, a mind-blowing psychic demonstration, provided spectacular entertainment and the live performing band MamaMia It’s Almost Abba was a great hit to the end.

“The evening was a great success,” said United Way President **Frances Lankin**. “The Blossom Ball is a wonderful example of the Chinese community’s support of United Way’s work in Toronto neighbourhoods.”

United Way of Greater Toronto

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For the fourth year in a row, United Way presented the Youth Achievement Awards to two young Chinese-Canadians, who have made a difference through community service. This year's award winners were Crystal Lau and Shirley Zeng, both 17 years old.

Crystal Lau organized three major volunteer projects with Bell United Wave, a United Way student program to involve youth in their community. She plans to pursue a post-secondary education in nursing to continue making a difference in the lives of others.

Shirley Zeng is a student ambassador for the Kids Help Phone program and a volunteer for Toronto Dollar, a local charity that supports community activities. In September, she will study commerce at the University of Toronto to become an economics teacher.

The evening also included a raffle draw that featured trips to Orlando, Barbados, Brazil, and more. Prizes were awarded to the team and individual who sold the most tickets. Dr. Ken Li won for individual and RBC Financial Group won for the team that sold the most.

Legend Chinese Restaurant was the Presenting Sponsor of this year's gala. "We are honoured to be the sponsors of the Blossom Ball for the next five years," said **Michael Lo**, President of Legend Chinese Restaurant. "We believe it's important to support our community and the Blossom Ball is certainly a worthy cause."

The annual gala significantly helps United Way's 200 social and health service agencies that support seniors, children, youth, abused women, newcomers to Canada and more.

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