



**United Way
of Greater Toronto**

For Immediate Release

**United Way pays tribute to four Toronto youth
for volunteer service and community involvement**

Get in the Way Awards to be handed out at 2005 Blossom Ball

TORONTO, June 16, 2005 – United Way is presenting the winners of this year's *Get in the Way Awards* at the United Way Blossom Ball this Saturday. The awards honour young people who have made outstanding contributions to their communities through volunteer work and community service.

Four recipients were selected – two elementary school students under the age of 13 and two secondary school students between the ages of 14 and 18. The winners are:

Bilal Rajan, 8 – When the South East Asian tsunami disaster hit last December, Bilal issued a Canada Kids Earthquake Challenge through UNICEF Canada urging all Canadian children to raise money. His challenge raised almost \$4 million including matching government funds. Bilal has been named UNICEF Canada's National Child Representative and is the founder of *Hands For Help*, an organization that aims to help children in need around the world.

Eric Yam, 12 – Eric is an active participant on the Equity Council at the University of Toronto School addressing issues such as bullying. He also organized an organ and tissue donation information booth, and coordinated bake sales raising thousands of dollars for South East Asian tsunami relief. Eric also created a multicultural festival celebrating religious and ethnic diversity and he is a runner for Meals-On-Wheels.

Mei Lun Shi, 18 – For the past two years, Mei Lun has hosted the Multi-Cultural Show at her school, promoting racial harmony, while raising funds for *Amnesty International*. In an effort to address social challenges in her neighbourhood, she coordinated a *Safety in the Community* conference for student representatives across North York and helped establish the *Harassment Awareness Month* at Georges Vanier to promote a violence and drug-free learning environment.

Yuan Zhou, 18 – Yuan is the chair of the Student Volunteer Council at Don Mills Collegiate Institute encouraging her classmates to get active in the community working with seniors, or helping out at the local food bank or soup kitchen. She has inspired her fellow classmates to sponsor a 10-year old Ugandan girl and headed a campaign that raised \$1,900 to build an orphanage in Kenya.

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The awards will be presented at the 2005 United Way Blossom Ball on Saturday, June 18 at the Westin Harbour Castle. Winners will receive a cash bursary – \$250 for elementary and \$500 for secondary – a trophy, and two tickets to the Ball.

“These four young people demonstrate a dedication to their communities that is an example to us all,” said **Frances Lankin**, President and CEO, United Way of Greater Toronto. “These awards give us an opportunity to show Toronto the positive influence youth are having on our city.”

Celebrity judges participating in the selection process were: **Sugar and Carlos**, hosts of YTV *Day Parts*, **Cynthia Mulligan**, Education Specialist with CityTV/CityPulse24, **Sue Grimbly**, Editor of *Brand New Planet (Toronto Star)*, **Lorraine Zander**, Editor of *Faze Magazine*, **Craig Battle**, Assistant Editor of *Owl Magazine*, and **Max Valiquette**, host of TVO’s *VOX Box*.

United Way of Greater Toronto is a community impact organization that supports a network of 200 social and health service agencies across Toronto, improving lives and strengthening neighbourhoods across Toronto. Through its Community Fund, United Way gives young children a healthy start in life, helps seniors live more independently, provides opportunities for youth, supports abused women and their children, helps homeless people, and assists newcomers achieve their potential. United Way is a catalyst for change, mobilizing community and business leaders, governments and key decision makers to address critical social issues and build strong communities.

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