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## Toronto program wins international award for social responsibility

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One-of-a-kind program gives break to parents of special needs children

TORONTO, May 27 /CNW/ - A prestigious awards program that recognizes organizations for outstanding Corporate Social Responsibility efforts announced Tourism Toronto's Relax, Recharge, Renew ("RRR") program as its 2010 winner.

The IMEX "Commitment to the Community" award is a globally-recognized honour that is given out every year in Frankfurt, Germany. IMEX is an international exhibition for the travel, meetings and events industry and attracts thousands of attendees annually.



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The IMEX awards program recognizes individuals and companies who have made outstanding contributions to the development of the meetings and incentive travel industry. The IMEX Green Award program, which includes the Commitment to the Community award, rewards and promotes environmental awareness and corporate social responsibility.

In the past several months the RRR program has also been recognized by PR News with a CSR Award in the Community Affairs category, the Destination Marketing Association International as one of its Destination Champions for 2009 and won the Tourism Innovator of the Year award from the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario.

"We are extremely proud of this unique program and the support we have received from nearly 200 Tourism Toronto member organizations since we began nearly two years ago," said David Whitaker, President and CEO of Tourism Toronto. "We are thrilled that our international meetings colleagues have also recognized its merit with this prestigious award and are mindful that together we can make a real difference in our community."

The Relax, Recharge, Renew program was started in summer 2008 as a unique way for businesses in the tourism and hospitality industry to participate in a community giving effort. The program provides parents of children with special needs a much-deserved break. Tourism Toronto, with the assistance of members and partners, provides a two-night hotel stay, limousine pick up, tickets to shows and museums and other attractions, and meals at local restaurants. Two families benefit from these weekend getaways every week and overall approximately 100 families are served each year.

The child with special needs is cared for in one of several high-quality, provincially-funded respite care centres. Under coordination of respireservices.com, the remarkable respite care facilities partnered on this program are Safehaven, Bloorview Kids Rehab, Community Living Toronto, Erinoakkids, and York Special Services.

Tourism Toronto's CSR program also includes providing scholarships at nine schools of tourism and hospitality in Southern Ontario and a comprehensive "green" program that includes purchasing carbon offsets for all flights.

About Tourism Toronto

Tourism Toronto, Toronto's Convention and Visitors Association, is an industry association of more than 1,200 members established to sell and market the greater Toronto region as a remarkable destination for tourists, convention delegates and business travellers around the globe. For more information please visit <http://www.seetorontonow.com/>.

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