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Tourism Toronto Wins IMEX Commitment To The Community Award

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Tourism Toronto, the Toronto Convention & Visitors Association, has won this year's globally recognised IMEX Commitment to the Community Award.

The Award pays tribute to meetings, incentive programmes, conferences, associations or business projects that demonstrate innovative efforts to benefit a charitable initiative.

They are judged on four criteria: suitability, creativity, sustainability and 'the power of one'.

This year the award was made in recognition of Tourism Toronto's Relax, Recharge & Renew programme.

The RRR programme provides the parents of children with special needs much-needed luxury weekend getaways, including limousine pick-up, two nights in a hotel, tickets to shows, museums and other attractions, meals at local restaurants and a gift, benefiting two families a week, every single week.

On collecting the award from IMEX Group Chairman, Ray Bloom, Tom Griffin, Manager of Research and Social Responsibility at Tourism Toronto, said: "All of us at Tourism Toronto are enormously proud of our Relax, Recharge & Renew programme, not only because it gives a much-deserved break to parent heroes, but also because our hotel, restaurant and attraction members have supported it wholeheartedly all the way."

"The response from our friends in the meetings community has also been very positive and encouraging, as the programme has become another shining example of how the hospitality and tourism industry can continue to share in the gift of giving".

Judges applauded the way in which Tourism Toronto coordinated and linked the tourism industry in Toronto with a community group that would otherwise have little interaction with it.

Pooling together the collective strength of its members and partner organisations as well as working with local care centres, members of the government and other professionals responsible for children and youth services, Tourism Toronto successfully created a special service for an often overlooked aspect of children's support services - the parents and siblings of children with special needs.

The IMEX judges were also particularly impressed with the wealth of positive testimonials received from grateful families and respite care professionals who had taken part in the programme.

Special mention was also offered in recognition of the time and efforts that many staff members

at Toronto Tourism had volunteered towards making the scheme a success together with the cooperation of the local Toronto tourism industry.

Other entries praised by the 2010 Commitment to the Community Award judges included MCI Dublin for its support of Irish Autism Action, the Sustainable Bonn programme and World Events.

The Commitment to the Community Award is one of 14 awards presented every year at the IMEX Gala Dinner. Of these, six are "green" awards, made in partnership and under the guidance of the Green Meeting Industry Council.