

**For Immediate Release****May 28, 2011****450 Youth Participated in the 7th Annual City Mosaic**

[May 28, 2011 – Toronto] The 7<sup>th</sup> annual City Mosaic race, hosted by Across U-hub, was held successfully on Saturday of May 28<sup>th</sup>. City Mosaic is an annual expedition race which encourages youths and adults alike to explore and appreciate the richness of multicultural diversity in Toronto. This year, over 450 youths participated in the event – 80 of whom are youths who have volunteered their time since last year to make this one day possible. The race started off at Albert Campbell Square in Scarborough Civic Centre. Guided by a series of questions provided in a booklet, participants visited 5 checkpoints around the city in teams of 4. To complete the race, teams were asked to carry out challenging group activities, collect interesting cultural and historical facts at each checkpoint location and return to the starting line all within merely 8 hours.

At the opening ceremony, Regional Councillor Gordon Landon brought a message from Mayor Frank Scarpitti of town of Markham. The honourable guest encouraged young people to step out of their comfort zone, explore the diversity of Toronto and strengthen their sense of belonging to the community. Mr. Stanley So, Vice-Chair of Board of Directors of Across U-hub, reminded all participants to always put safety in the first place. Dr. Eric Fong, Chair of Board of Directors, Mr. Stanley So, Vice-chair of Board of Directors, Ms. Maria Yau, Member of Board of Directors and Ms. Nicole Wong, Executive Director, represented Across U-hub in inviting honourable guests and special guests Councillor Chin Lee, City of Toronto, Ms. Aruna Dorai and Ms. Tenneshia Smith, Board Member and representative of Social Services Network, Ms. Truc Huynh, Board Member of the Vietnamese Women's Association of Toronto and Mr. Eric Li, Chairperson of Vision Youth to kick off the race this year. During the closing ceremony, many other guests came to join the celebration and award presentation including Councillor Godwin Chan, City of Richmond Hill, Mr. Larry Law and Mr. Elton and Viola Cheung.

At the closing ceremony, Across U-hub board member, Ms. Maria Yau, who has been in the education and research field for many years, conducted a simple survey with the 450 participating youth from the City Mosaic event. Youth's response to the survey was that after a full day of race, they felt tired, had fun, made new friends, learned something new, and gained a sense of community. Yau explained that tiredness is from all the physical activities, fun means emotionally fulfilled, making new friend means socially broadened, learning new things means increasing in knowledge, and gaining a sense of community means building a sense of belonging—and these are exactly the five purposes of City Mosaic.

City Mosaic has been held every year on the last Saturday of May since 2005. This year was the seventh year in hosting the race in Toronto. And many have questioned how the race can stay on edge, stay innovative and stay fun without repeating the questions from previous years. To that, Executive Director of Across U-hub, Ms. Nicole Wong responded, "The uniqueness of City Mosaic is neither in the "City" nor the "Mosaic", it is the "Youth Power" behind the event! Only

youths can understand and see eye to eye with youths. Every single youth can see and explore the richness of cultures in Toronto in a unique way. City Mosaic is a program planned by the youths, for the youths. This is the source of confidence which we have in order to carry out City Mosaic each year.” The organizer strongly believed that City Mosaic is a key in connecting more people to the community and encouraging them to experience the multicultural heritage and the rich history of Toronto--especially for youth that grew up under the influence of the cyber world. The dynamics of a team setting encourages interactions and allows participants to develop their communication and problem solving abilities. “City Mosaic” also helps participants to grow a stronger sense of belonging to Canada. It is particularly helpful for many youth of immigrant backgrounds.

The checkpoints visited this year included the Toronto District School Board Head Office located on Yonge Street, the business area of West Queen West where participants got a taste of the lively and vibrant cultures of the art and design district, the North York Civic Centre, Queen’s Park where teams explored the various statues around the park, the Brookfield Place and surrounding area, the Air Canada Centre, and Greek Town.

After a whole day of competition, the City Mosaic Champion went to *Team O\_o*, first runner up went to *Team Fruit Loops* and second runner up went to *Team Just Run No Eat*. *Team Panther* took home the City Mosaic Top Explorer Award. This team managed to answer some of the most challenging questions this year. *Team Tortoise* took home the Top Crew Award. They performed brilliantly as a team and were able to score well on all the challenges across the checkpoints. The Top Tee Award went to *Team Gryffindor* who designed the back of their T-shirts creatively under the Organizer’s theme of ‘What does Toronto mean to you?’.

This summer, Across U-hub will launch a series of events for young people to develop their leadership skills, and nurture their physical and psychological well-being. Besides their popular weekly Re-feel Program which will continue on throughout the summer on every Thursday night, the 12th annual Youth Leadership Training Camp will take place this year in Camp Couchiching, Orillia between Sept 2<sup>nd</sup> and September 5<sup>th</sup>. Youths between the ages of 16 to 23 are welcomed to sign up. Register early as spaces are limited. Apply on or before July 18, 2011 for an early bird discount. Registration deadline is August 8, 2011. Registration form is available at Across U-hub office (160 GIBSON DR, UNIT 1, MARKHAM), or visit [www.acrossuhub.com](http://www.acrossuhub.com). For more information, please call (905) 944-1944.

### **Across U-hub Overview**

*Together we help nurture our youth:*

- *to become a bridge across cultures by taking roots in Canada while developing a global perspective*
- *to become servant leaders for communities by helping them grow holistically*

### **Work:**

*We adopt creative, interactive and multi-disciplinary approaches:*

- *to nurture our youths' holistic growth*

- *to cultivate their servant leadership skills*
- *to promote peer support and mentorship*
- *to foster their sense of community and to encourage active participation in cultural and civic activities*