



# Chinese Philanthropy in Ontario

In January 2013, the Association of Fundraising Professionals Foundation for Philanthropy – Canada hosted a conference that brought together charity leaders, donors and volunteers to explore the philanthropy of the Chinese community in Ontario. Here is a collection of insights from the conference and beyond.

## AT A GLANCE

- 1 300 000+** Chinese population in Canada
- 537 060** Chinese population in the Greater Toronto Area
- 3 and 4** Cantonese and Mandarin are the third and fourth most spoken languages in Canada
- 44** Percentage of Cantonese speakers born in Hong Kong
- 85** Percentage of Mandarin speakers born in Mainland China or Taiwan
- 50 000+** Number of international students in Canada from China
- 48** Percentage of Chinese-Canadians who have investible assets of \$50,000+
- 27** Percentage of Chinese-Canadian households reporting incomes over \$100,000

## SAVE THE DATE

Chinese New Year, also known as the Lunar New Year, is an important annual holiday celebrated at the turn of the Chinese calendar. This occasion is commonly marked by fireworks, family gatherings and charitable giving.

## CASE STUDY

With an art gallery, theatre, banquet hall, resource centre and meeting rooms, the Chinese Cultural Centre (CCC) in Toronto is an important hub for the Chinese community. As one of the largest Chinese community centres in North America, the CCC hosts a number of summer camps for youth, business conferences, national celebrations, international performances and art exhibitions. Several years ago, the CCC embarked on a \$30 million capital campaign to expand its capacity. With support from individual and corporate major gift donors and annual donations from the community at large, the CCC is a shining example of how the Chinese community rallied behind a project that has a long-term impact on its members and beyond.

## WISE WORDS



“The speakers at the Chinese Philanthropy Conference shared a number of insights about giving. Throughout the day, we heard that the community’s vast diversity means that a ‘one size fits all’ approach doesn’t work. For example, some of us have been in Canada for generations, some have been here for only a few years. Some of us have grown up under British rule, some under communism. We have different languages and dialects, religious beliefs and customs. And with all of these nuances come so many different perspectives to giving. Generally speaking, however, relationships really matter to our community. But it’s not just the relationship between the fundraiser and the donor; it’s between the charitable organization you represent and the Chinese community. Take time to learn about the complexity of the Chinese culture and be very clear about how someone’s gift will have an impact on the community from which you are asking money. For all of these reasons, people tend to be more receptive to solicitations made by someone who has built trust and shown a sincere commitment to fostered these bonds.”

— Justin Poy, Philanthropist and Chair, Chinese Philanthropy Conference

## BACK IN TIME

IN 1788, A SMALL NUMBER OF CHINESE CARPENTERS AND SHIPBUILDERS ARRIVED IN VANCOUVER.

Shortly thereafter, successive waves of labourers travelled across the ocean from China to pan for gold along the Fraser River. Between 1881 and 1885, more than 15,000 people were brought from China as indentured labourers to build the Canadian Pacific Railway. Prior to WWII, the Chinese community was subject to a head tax. At the same time, the Chinese Immigration Act

prevented Chinese women from joining their husbands in Canada. These policies changed when, in 1943, the government of the day repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act, followed by the adoption of United Nations Charter of Human Rights in 1948. Chinese-Canadians were finally granted the right to vote in 1947 and immigrants from Hong Kong and other parts of the Asia-Pacific region began to

settle in greater numbers thereafter. Decades later, Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued an official apology to Chinese-Canadians for the historical wrongs they faced. In 2001, the federal government declared May as Asian Heritage Month to recognize the many contributions of the Chinese community in Canada.

## INSIGHTS FROM THE EXPERTS

Conference presenters and participants shared many great examples and tips about giving within the Chinese community. Here is what we heard:

**RAISE AWARENESS AND PROMOTE YOUR CAUSE BY DRAWING ON THE VAST CHINESE MEDIA OUTLETS IN ONTARIO.**

**COLD CALLS RARELY WORK. DONOR INTERACTIONS NEED TO BE PERSONAL.**

**GIVING OFTEN BEGINS WITH SUPPORT FOR FAMILY MEMBERS AND THEN THE BROADER CHINESE COMMUNITY.**

**EDUCATIONAL CHARITIES HAVE THE GREATEST POTENTIAL FOR GARNERING PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT FROM THE CHINESE COMMUNITY.**

**FUNDRAISERS MAY NEED TO EDUCATE NEW IMMIGRANTS ABOUT THE TAX BENEFITS OF GIVING.**

**FOR THOSE WHO GREW-UP UNDER COMMUNIST RULE, WESTERN GIVING PRACTICES MAY NEED TO BE FULLY EXPLAINED.**

**SERVING AS A BOARD MEMBER GIVES POTENTIAL DONORS A CHANCE TO LEARN ABOUT YOUR CHARITY.**

**BE PATIENT AND BUILD FRIENDSHIPS. THE BIGGEST MISTAKE IS BEING "TOO" PROFESSIONAL.**

**FUNDRAISERS AND CHARITIES NEED TO EARN THE TRUST OF THE COMMUNITY BEFORE SOLICITING DONATIONS.**

**BEFORE ASKING FOR MONEY, ENGAGE DONORS IN THE CREATION OF YOUR FUNDRAISING STRATEGY.**

**COMMUNITY EVENTS ARE ABOUT NETWORKING, VISIBILITY AND AWARENESS, NOT JUST FUNDRAISING.**

**FOR SOME, GIVING TIME HAS THE SAME VALUE AS GIVING MONEY.**

**"EVEN THOUGH I MAY LOOK DIFFERENT, IT DOESN'T MEAN I DON'T IDENTIFY AS A CANADIAN!"**

**CHINESE-CANADIANS FROM HONG KONG TEND TO BE FAMILIAR WITH NORTH AMERICAN GIVING PRACTICES. OTHER CHINESE COMMUNITIES ARE BEGINNING TO CATCH-UP.**

**TAKE THE TIME TO LEARN ABOUT THE CULTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN IMMIGRANTS FROM MAINLAND CHINA, HONG KONG, TAIWAN AND OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES.**

**ACCORDING TO BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY, GIVING HELPS YOU ENTER NIRVANA.**

**FOR A FULL LIST OF REFERENCES, VIDEOS AND RESOURCES, PLEASE VISIT:**

[www.afpinclusivegiving.ca](http://www.afpinclusivegiving.ca)

The Chinese Philanthropy Conference was part of a series for fundraising professionals, donors, and volunteers to develop a greater understanding of the giving traditions and charitable interests of several diverse communities in Ontario. Organized by the AFP Greater Toronto Chapter and the AFP Ottawa Chapter, this initiative was generously funded by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's Partnership Project and the AFP Foundation for Philanthropy – Canada.