

Japan Relief Effort an Example of Canadian Multicultural Success

I know we're in the middle of an election, and it seems that it's all anyone can talk about. But last night I was at an extraordinary event, a fundraiser for relief for Japan in the aftermath of the disaster. There have been many events and efforts to raise money for Japan relief, but this one was extraordinary because it was organized by the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto and the member organizations of the Canadian Multicultural Council – Asians in Ontario (of which there are over 20).

Students of history will know that, over the course of time, the relationships between China and Japan, and between Japan and a number of other Asian countries, including Korea, have not been...well...exactly warm. On the contrary, there has been great conflict, and much bad feeling. (I mention Korea in particular because I was a grateful guest of a group of Korean-Canadians who bought a number of tables.) This is why, for me, last night exemplified one of the things about Canada that I am most proud of---that we stand, uniquely, as a true multicultural success. While other countries like Germany and the UK make statements about the "failures" of multiculturalism in their countries, Canada is a place where it works. Not always perfectly, of course, and sometimes it takes a while---but all told, Canada has proved that multiculturalism can and does work.

Once here, so many are able to turn former anger, former bad feelings into a new life, one that embraces different cultures, different languages and different customs—yet they manage to let former hostilities wane once they find themselves here, in a new country, looking forward, with new opportunities for themselves and their families. Yes, it can take a generation to get beyond past hurts, past prejudices. Sometimes it takes even longer. But last night's event was a true example of what a great country Canada is, and why.

For more information on how to help the people of Japan, please click here:

http://www.jccc.on.ca/japan_earthquake_relief_fund.htm