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**Press Release
For Immediate Release
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**For More Information
Contact:**
Cynthia Shipley
Manager, Public Relations
and Events
(416) 392-5938



A "Giant" Surprise!

Toronto, Ontario, Thursday, December 6, 2012: The Toronto Zoo has been advised that, during a giant panda physical examination conducted November 2012 in China, that the Chongqing Zoo's "Er Shun", previously thought to be a male is, in fact, a female. In preparation of the upcoming transport of the giant pandas to Canada testing was conducted with blood samples being collected and sent to Sichuan University and the Genetics Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences for gene and chromosome sexing.

In order to continue the positive cooperation of this important project between Canada and China, the Chinese Government has selected a healthy and age-appropriate male giant panda from Chengdu for the replacement of the originally scheduled female panda "Ji Li". Toronto and Calgary Zoo will now be welcoming female "Er Shun" and male "Da Mao". Da Mao was born September 1, 2008 at Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding and was conceived through artificial insemination and was hand-reared.

"With younger giant pandas it is more difficult to determine the sex and this is confirmed through genetic testing techniques," explains Dr. William Rapley, Toronto Zoo Executive Director Conservation, Education and Wildlife. "We are appreciative of the fact that the Chinese Association of Zoological Gardens conducted the studies so that the situation can be rectified and we can continue to move forward in smoothly handling this important conservation breeding loan."

The Toronto Zoo is tremendously excited about the arrival of the giant pandas "Er Shun" and "Da Mao" Spring 2013, when the Zoo expects to open the Giant Panda Exhibit.

For more details on Toronto Zoo's giant pandas check out torontozoo.com

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Current Zoo Hours are 9:30am to 4:30pm.

Last admission is one hour before closing. General admission 13-64 is \$20, Children three and under are free, Children 4 to 12 are \$11, and Seniors 65+ are \$15. Parking is \$10. Events and admission prices are subject to change without notice. The Zoo is located at Meadowvale Road and Hwy 401, Exit #389 eastbound and westbound. For more information, call 416 392-5929. The Toronto Zoo is open year round (except Dec. 25).