



For Immediate Release  
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## **PARTY HOSTS INCREASINGLY CHOOSE DONATIONS OVER GIFTS**

### **New Website Makes Supporting Charities Easy**

**KATONAH, NY (December 7, 2011)** – For guests of the Royal Wedding this spring, choosing the perfect gift was surprisingly simple. Prince William and Catherine Middleton, like an increasing number of couples, requested guests skip the obligatory crystal bowls and toasters in favor of donations to their favorite charities. To celebrate their birthdays, Will and Jada Pinkett Smith raised over \$100,000 for clean water projects – and then started a campaign encouraging others to do the same. It’s a trend that extends to all sorts of events, from birthday parties and weddings to memorials.

For Lynn Siegel, a mother of three and the former owner of a Wall Street executive search firm, requesting charitable donations for her kids’ birthday parties has become an annual tradition. “My kids love toys as much as anyone their age,” she notes, “but I realized they felt more gratified and excited about giving than receiving.” So the kids began choosing a favorite charity to support with each birthday, and with the help of their friends, began raising significant funds for causes they care about. Then Siegel decided there had to be a better and easier way to communicate the idea to guests. That inspiration led to Charity Panda.

Charitypanda.com was launched last month as a way to connect everyday people and charities – and make giving easy. For event hosts, it simplifies the whole process. They can invite friends, choose a charity, collect tax-deductible donations, and keep track of RSVPs all with just a few clicks. And for charities, Charity Panda has proven to be an innovative and effective way to reach new donors.

In today’s economy, finding new sources of giving is especially important for non-profit organizations. According to the Nonprofit Research Collaborative, nearly 60 percent of the 875 nonprofits it surveyed achieved no increase in donations or saw giving drop in the first nine months of 2011. The Chronicle of Philanthropy recently pointed out that donations by the nation’s 50 top philanthropists hit a new low since

the rankings began in 2000.

So who's going to keep these charities alive? Well, in Siegel's mind, every little bit counts: "While it might be just a \$15 donation, when part of a group, those donations add up and have big impact. And for the individuals and communities served by these charities, \$15 brings more happiness than another set of Legos in my son's toybox could ever bring."

### **About Charity Panda**

Giving is always better than receiving. That's the inspiration behind Charity Panda, a website that empowers party hosts to raise funds for charity organizations. With Charity Panda, hosts can invite guests to their event and ask them to donate to charity in lieu of gifts. Their donations will be 100% tax deductible, and Charity Panda takes care of everything electronically – from personalized invitations and reminders to RSVPs and thank you notes. Charity Panda works for any event, including birthday parties, holiday gatherings, weddings, dinner parties, and memorials. For more information about Charity Panda, visit [charitypanda.com](http://charitypanda.com) or contact founder Lynn Siegel at 914.481.6292 or [info@charitypanda.com](mailto:info@charitypanda.com).

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