



MIKA'S MIRACLE ... Surgery recipient Mika Agustin, is flanked by fundraising auction chairman Claire Duboc, left, Mika's mom Minda and Operation Herbie president Norma Fitzgerald.

— Zoran Bozicevic, SUN

Herbie's heart of gold

By SHARON LEM
Toronto Sun

Fundraiser to help sick children

Little Mika Agustin used to have trouble breathing and sleeping. And she tired easily.

The six-year-old Filipino girl underwent surgery at the Hospital for Sick Children by Dr. Glen Van Arsdel on Nov. 3 to correct a life-threatening heart defect.

"I want to thank you so very much for extending your generosity to my daughter," said Mika's mom, Minda, 47.

"We can go back to our country with much joy and we will remember forever what you have given to us."

The life-saving trip to Toronto was made possible by The Herbie Fund.

"Mika has done really well and I'm really pleased this committee has taken on so much responsibility and opened up their hearts to over 300 children," Gina Godfrey, co-founder of Sick Kids' Operation Herbie, said yesterday as she launched a silent auction drive to raise money to treat

more kids like Mika.

This year's auction features hand-decorated pieces of children's furniture by 16 of Canada's finest designers and artists.

Contributors include Eva Gordon, Barbara Reynolds, Judith Fraser, Kate Zeidler, Gary Zanner, Heather Dunn, Heather Shaw and Sharin Barber.

Surgical care

Operation Herbie — the fundraising arm of The Herbie Fund — provides life-saving surgical care for children from around the globe.

The fund was established by Godfrey and her husband, Sun Media CEO and president Paul Godfrey, in 1979 in response to the plight of seven-month-old Herbie Quinones of Brooklyn, N.Y., whose life was in jeopardy because funding was not available to send him to Sick Kids.

Since its inception, the fund has spent \$7 million to help 369 children from 77 countries.

The one-of-a-kind works of art will be on display until Dec. 9 at Hazelton Lanes, leading up to the 17th annual Mistletoe Ball on Dec. 11 at the Four Seasons Hotel.

"It's going to be a wonderful ball," Gina Godfrey said. "Rather than looking at the coming millennium, we've taken a look back at the century with entertainment from different eras, food and decor and other items which would reflect the 1950s to the 1990s."

Call the Herbie Hotline at 416-813-7812 to make bids on the furniture or to order tickets to the Mistletoe Ball.

To donate to the fund, mail cheques to the Herbie Fund, the Hospital for Sick Children, 555 University Ave., Toronto, Ont. M5G 1X8.

november 16, 1999 Toronto Sun (newspaper)