



Kristine Snow Millard

Jack Erler Award Recipient 2023

The Jack Erler Award is given for outstanding contributions to organized camping, as exemplified by Jack Erler's long-time contributions to Maine Summer Camps. It is presented to individuals, groups, or organizations that may or may not be members of Maine Summer Camps, to recognize exceptional support of Maine Summer Camps. This year's Jack Erler Award recipient – the second ever recipient of the award – embodies the best qualities of a colleague, team member and team player. She has exceptional talent and skill sets that co-workers, collaborators, MSC board and committee members, camp members, camp staff, campers, and families rely upon. And she has used them to provide exceptional support for Maine Summer Camps. She makes every effort to enable others to shine as she prefers to stay out of the spotlight. Yet, her voice has been prominently featured over the years as a primary voice of MSC, as she has featured camps, our organization, and the importance and impact of the camp experience in myriad ways.

As a camper, mother of campers, camp staff member, and spouse of a camp leadership team member, she has an appreciation for the power of the summer camp experience that is based on significant experience. As a highly educated professional, her advanced degrees, a J.D. from the Boston University School of Law, and an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Southern Maine, inform her work significantly.

Her ability to articulate the impact of the camp experience in stories for external and internal audiences is masterful – whether she's editing the MSC Newsletter for our members, crafting a grant application for a funder, or creating a blog post or article for the entire world to see. She can be seen all over the state of Maine quietly observing and photographing campers and camps in preparation for her writing about camp. As a prolific writer and editor, you have seen her words and photos firsthand in the Hall Monitor, The Art of Outdoor Living, and the MSC Newsletter for the past 9 years. Her writing appeared in weekly articles about Maine camps that were featured in the Bangor Daily News over the span of 3 years; she is also the author of the most articles in the Summer Camp Section of the Maine Sunday Telegram.

She has volunteered significant time to the Business Network Extravaganza, Camp Fairs, the ACA Conference, and every MSC semi-annual and annual meeting. She also visits JMG Test Camp every summer and has been a visitor to many camps to soak in the atmosphere and experience. Her grant writing efforts have shepherded the Maine Timberland Charitable Trust relationship for JMG for the past 8 years and garnered over \$300,000 for the program.

Rescuing the Level Ground Initiative on more than one occasion, she provided excellent mentorship to the Coordinator for Level Ground and even took on the role of Coordinator as needed, writing a compelling statement to share with funders, researching and submitting grants, organizing events to connect camps and kids, and collaborating with community partners. Level Ground Committee members often wonder if the initiative would still be moving forward if it weren't for her.

MSC Level Ground Committee colleagues say “She is an incredible asset to Maine Summer Camps who is so humble and quiet about her contributions that they have a terrible tendency to go completely unnoticed. And we, as Level Ground Committee members, think that needs to change! This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of a highly dedicated, talented non-traditional camping professional who works behind the scenes to keep our organization strong and vibrant and touches every aspect of MSC with her compassion and warmth.”

For all these attributes, her unparalleled service as the Communications & Program Consultant for Maine Summer Camps, and her outstanding and longtime contributions to Maine's camping industry, the 2023 recipient of the Jack Erler Award is Kristine Snow Millard.

Past Recipient of the Jack Erler Award

For outstanding contributions to organized camping

Laura Blaisdell, MD, MPH FAAP – 2021 Jack Erler Award Recipient

It is fitting that the inaugural recipient of the Jack Erler Award has demonstrated through vast expertise and passion a profound influence upon policies affecting Maine youth camps.

A pediatrician, public health expert, researcher, and camp medical director, the 2021 recipient of this award has effected change in childhood vaccine policy. She has made broad contributions both regionally and nationally on issues related to camps' communicable diseases policies. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began 18 months ago she has utilized her full range of medical, research, and communications expertise to guide camps, camping organizations, schools, and policy makers in implementing comprehensive and effective policy measures to keep children healthy and safe. The impact of these efforts has proven invaluable, particularly for the Maine camping industry to which she has longstanding personal and professional connections.

This year's Jack Erler Award recipient was instrumental in helping to ensure the broad childhood vaccination requirements through her work with Maine Public Law, Ch. 154 in 2019. She was well equipped through her nascent consulting practice to redirect her energies in 2020 to addressing camps' and organizations' needs for expert leadership on issues surrounding COVID-19. Since then, she was lead author of a national CDC MMWR study on camps' handling of the pandemic and has assisted both the American Camp Association, the Association of Camp Nurses, federal and state CDC personnel, Maine state officials, camps and public and private schools across the U.S. in managing COVID-19 responses and prevention and mitigation efforts.

The impact of her commitment and abilities has been vast. Like Jack Erler himself, this year's award winner has brought a combination of professional excellence, an understanding of camps' needs, and a spirit of true care for Maine youth camps' missions.

Maine Summer Camps cannot credit this recipient enough, for the successes Maine youth camps experienced these past two summers in implementing communicable disease plans to navigate the challenges of COVID-19.

Acknowledging her profound and positive influence on camps' pandemic landscape, Maine Summer Camps awards the 2021 Jack Erler Award to Laura Blaisdell, MD, MPH, FAAP.



The Jack Erler Award

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The award recipient will be chosen by the Maine Summer Camps Awards Committee. The award will be granted only upon determination of an appropriate candidate

Jack Erler's commitment to Maine youth camping has extended throughout his 50-year career as an attorney, collaborator, and advocate. His contributions date back decades, perhaps marked first by his invaluable role in 1974 in working with Maine's Department of Health and Human Services to draft the original youth camp rules. Since then, he has been instrumental in each substantive revision of those rules. For more than 35 years Jack represented camps in the breadth and depth of their operations, including issues related to children, employment, health and safety, regulatory compliance, organizational structure, land use, environmental issues, taxes, transactions, and transition planning. He has been a familiar face at hundreds of staff training sessions, offering vital education to support camps in operating safe, professional, compassionate programming.

His legislative and policy impact has also been vast, evidenced by a rich continuity of knowledge and decades of truly understanding Maine youth camps. A passionate advocate as well, Jack Erler's broad and expert influence has made Maine camps the industry leader throughout the U.S. This award represents Maine Summer Camps' heartfelt respect, admiration, and appreciation for Jack Erler's talent, humility, commitment, and invaluable contributions to Maine's youth camping industry.

The Maine Youth Camping Foundation dba Maine Summer Camps

Maine Summer Camps is a membership organization for camp directors, staff, parents and supporters of camping and outdoor adventure programs for children and youth. It is dedicated to quality youth camping experiences for children of all ages from all parts of the world.

The Foundation also provides education and training programs for both professional and volunteer leaders of the more than 200 camps in Maine. It conducts a Junior Maine Guide program in cooperation with the Maine State Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Foundation leaders provide counsel and support in the development of a State of Maine Program for Trip Leader Training and Certification.

Membership dues, along with contributions and grants provide the resources for the programs of the Foundation. The organization is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation. Volunteers, under the leadership of an elected board of directors, conduct programs and activities of the foundation.

Maine Summer Camps

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