



Jim Chalmers
Jack Erler Award Recipient 2025

The Jack Erler Award recognizes outstanding contributions to organized camping, as exemplified by Jack Erler’s own long-time service 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.

When camp directors describe the 2025 award recipient, they use words that exemplify vital qualities in a camp leader. Knowledgeable. Compassionate. Empathetic. Generous. That this year’s awardee is not a camp owner or director speaks volumes about his ability to support camps and, as one camp administrator says, serve as a “trusted counselor and advisor.”

“He’s not just listening to you. He’s hearing you.”

“When I think of him, I think of class,” says this camp executive director. “He’s always very kind, always very considerate, very empathetic. He wants to understand the culture of your camp.”

The award recipient, a fourth-generation insurance business owner, serves as a “strategic partner,” this colleague and client says. He seeks to “create the best health and safety practices to protect kids, staff, and community.” Another camp director says that “he is the one who you trust to help you and to be there and steer you in the right direction.”

The longevity of the awardee’s business is impressive, camp directors say. “They have been assisting camps with regard to insurance policies questions and general liability for as long as I can remember. I also worked with his father,” says Jack Erler, who himself provided legal counsel to Maine camps for more than five decades.

As a result, the award recipient is highly attuned to camp operations. “For someone who doesn’t run a camp, he has a ton of insight into what it takes,” says another camp professional. “He’s quite empathetic to the challenges camp directors face.”

Part of that empathy translates to demonstrating “reassuring calmness,” when circumstances require his guidance, particularly when an incident arises during the camp season. “It’s really good to be able to reach someone who has that level of experience and knowledge,” a camp owner says. Another owner/director reports that when his camp faces a “dire situation, my first call is to him.” With those conversations come assurances that the awardee and his team will address the situation so that camp directors can continue to focus on kids and camp.

He is also “knowledgeable and even keeled,” this camp professional continues. “He doesn’t get overly upset about anything, he knows his business, and he is there whenever you need.”

Camp directors also praise the recipient’s extraordinary generosity of time and experience. His business has for years sponsored a broad range of MSC events, including educational workshops, webinars, and the Maine social gathering at the ACA, New England annual conference. These generous contributions are truly valuable to camp professionals, making “the camping industry a better industry – more safe and more effective for kids,” says one camp director.

For all these extraordinary qualities, and his outstanding service in support of organized youth camping in Maine, Maine Summer Camps presents the 2025 Jack Erler award to Chalmers Insurance Group Chief Sales Officer Jim Chalmers.