

# Past Recipients of the Jack Erler Award

*For outstanding contributions to organized camping*

## Jim Chalmers - 2025 Erler Award Recipient

This year's Jack Erler Award recipient – the third ever recipient of the award – is described by camp directors as knowledgeable, compassionate, empathetic, and 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.” 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.

## Kris Millard - 2023 Erler Award Recipient

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.

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.

## 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.