

Medal for Exceptional Contributions 2005



Public Health Agency of Canada / Agence de santé publique du Canada

Université de Montréal

LEADERS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

This year again, the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development (CEECD) honors four leaders whose work and dedication have helped ensure that Canada's youngest citizens—those aged zero to five—reach their full potential. The recipients of the 2005 Medal for Exceptional Contributions to Early Childhood Development are the late Dr. David Offord, Dr. Edward F. Zigler, the Honourable Landon Pearson and the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation.

DR. DAVID OFFORD

A world-renowned child psychiatrist and a champion of children's mental health issues, Dr. David "Dan" Offord spent his career building scientific knowledge of mental illness in the early years. He also ensured that this information could be disseminated and translated into policy and planning. Dr. Offord was the founding director of McMaster University's Offord Centre for Child Studies (formerly the Canadian Centre for Studies of Children at Risk), a research centre dedicated to finding solutions to young children's emotional, cognitive and social problems. He led a

groundbreaking study in 1983 called the Ontario Child Health Study which outlined the extent to which very young children struggled with emotional and behavioural difficulties. His academic work didn't prevent him from rolling up his sleeves each year as the volunteer director of Christie Lake, a camp for Ottawa-area children living in poverty. The recipient of many awards and honours, Dr. Offord was given the Order of Canada in 2001. Sadly, Dr. Offord died in 2004, but his legacy lives on and may be summed up in his own words:



DR. DAVID OFFORD

"The challenge in Canada is to make sure all kids have full participation in life and that the things I value for my kids are available to all. That translates into equal access, equal participation and equitable outcomes for every child"

For more information: www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca

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