

REACHING THE SUMMIT: AN EXCEPTIONAL TRIO!

In 2003, the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development (CEECD) created a new award, the "Medal for Exceptional Contributions to Early Childhood Development", to recognize those who make outstanding efforts to improve the lives of young children. In its inaugural year, the medal has been awarded to an exceptional trio: Mr. André Chagnon, Dr. Fraser Mustard and the Honourable Margaret Norrie McCain.

MR. ANDRÉ CHAGNON

Founder and former president of the internationally recognized telecommunications company Vidéotron Inc., Mr. André Chagnon also set up the largest private foundation in Canada. The mission of the André and Lucie Chagnon Foundation is to improve the physical and

psycho-
social
well be-
ing of in-
dividuals,
families

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- Mr. André Chagnon

and children by focusing on the causes of illness and socio-economic exclusion. In setting the Foundation's priorities, Mr. Chagnon was deeply influenced by his meetings with Dr. Fraser Mustard, who emphasized the need and importance of early childhood programs. After much research and consultation, the Foundation decided to focus on children between the ages of zero and six. As Mr. Chagnon



Mr. André Chagnon (right) receives the CEECD Award from Dr. Richard E. Tremblay, Director of the Centre of Excellence.

noted, "If we want to make a difference, there is only one place we should start: early childhood development." The Foundation is investing several million dollars a year to support programs for pregnant mothers and young children in poor neighbourhoods. This unparalleled investment is meant to significantly reduce child poverty, a known risk factor for a host of social, health and developmental problems.

For more information: www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca

The Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development is one of five Centres of Excellence for Children's Well-Being funded by Health Canada.

The views expressed herein do not represent the official policies of Health Canada.

DR. FRASER MUSTARD

Dr. Fraser Mustard began his career as a cardiologist, making groundbreaking contributions to the understanding and treatment of heart attacks. His research into cardiac problems led to an examination of the social and economic factors that influence human health and development. In 1982, he established the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, a unique, interdisciplinary centre bringing together experts in many fields to explore the complex relationships between society, the economy, individuals and populations. Dr. Mustard's research increasingly focused on the prenatal months and early childhood years because, he says, *"experience-based brain development in the early years of life sets patterns for health risks, behaviour and the ability to learn."*

In 1999, at the request of the Ontario government, he co-chaired a landmark study entitled



Dr. Fraser Mustard, recipient of the CEECD Award.

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healthy, competent citizens and called for major new investments in early childhood development. Today, Dr. Mustard works with governments around the world, helping them to understand the vital connection between optimal early development and the long-term health of societies.

"The Early Years." It outlined the crucial role the early years play in forming

THE HONOURABLE MARGARET NORRIE McCAIN

The Honourable Margaret Norrie McCain has always advocated children's well-being, whether as New Brunswick's Lieutenant Governor, a social worker, a mother or a grandmother. While living in a small New Brunswick community, Mrs. Norrie McCain became involved with the issue of family violence, helping to create the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Foundation, which worked towards eliminating family violence through education

and research. She was appointed Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick in 1994, and continued to focus her work on the link between families in crisis and the devastating price paid by the children. After moving to Toronto, she met Dr. Fraser Mustard, who convinced her that *"if I was going to be involved with prevention, I had to move into early childhood development."*

In 1999, Dr. Mustard asked her to co-chair The Early Years study, and in 2002 she co-chaired the



The Honourable Margaret Norrie McCain, recipient of the CEECD Award.

City of Toronto's Commission for Early Learning and Child Care. Mrs. Norrie McCain continues to advocate comprehensive, community-based early childhood services, which focus on optimal child development.

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- The Honourable Margaret Norrie McCain

"A MODEL OF COMMITMENT"

In awarding medals to this exceptional trio, CEECD director Richard E. Tremblay noted, ***"they serve as a model of commitment to early childhood development."*** Although they come from very different backgrounds, Mr. André Chagnon, Dr. Fraser Mustard and Mrs. Norrie McCain share a common passion. Together, they represent 220 years of hard work that has put early childhood issues on the national agenda. ***"They have had a strong influence on the entire population by influencing governments to invest in early childhood development"***, Dr. Tremblay added. With 33 grandchildren among them, they serve as a beacon for society, shining a light on the need to invest in the early years to ensure a healthy future for the world. 🦋

by Liz Warwick