



Mary Utne O'Brien

**The Mary Utne O'Brien Award
for Excellence in Expanding the
Evidence-Based Practice of
Social and Emotional Learning**

In April 2010, the field of SEL lost a dedicated and inspirational colleague, Mary Utne O'Brien. To honor Mary's memory and promote her dedication to high-quality practice in social and emotional learning, the CASEL board of directors decided to establish a new award focused exclusively on expanding evidence-based social and emotional learning practice. CASEL expects to honor two awardees annually for their work in either the field of practice or the field of public policy. Depending on the year, awards might be made to two policymakers, or to two educators, or one award to a policymaker and one to an educator. The decision on how to allocate the awards will depend on the accomplishments in the field during the year.

Award selection process. The nominating committee for the 2011 Mary Utne O'Brien Awards is the CASEL Board of Directors and the following colleagues: Pat Chesler, Janice Jackson, Linda Lantieri, Pamela McVeagh-Lally, David Osher, Eric Schaps, and Robert Sherman. After considering the list of outstanding nominees, the selection committee determined the two award recipients. The 2011 selection committee consists of Ann Nerad (chair), Stephen Arnold, Jennifer Buffett, Linda Darling-Hammond, Mark Greenberg, Linda Lantieri, Eric Schaps, Tim Shriver, and Roger Weissberg.

Source of award funds. The CASEL board of directors has established separate funds for the awards to honor the memory of our colleagues Joe Zins and Mary Utne O'Brien. Those wishing to contribute to the award funds may do so by designating their contributions to either the Joseph E. Zins Awards or the Mary Utne O'Brien Awards in checks made out to CASEL and sent to the address below.

**Collaborative for Academic, Social,
and Emotional Learning
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www.casel.org



**MARY UTNE O'BRIEN
AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN
EXPANDING THE EVIDENCE-
BASED PRACTICE OF
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL
LEARNING**

APRIL 13, 2011

**AWARDED AT THE
CASEL 2011 FORUM**

***EXPANDING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL
LEARNING NATIONWIDE: LET'S GO!***

**COLLABORATIVE FOR ACADEMIC, SOCIAL,
AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING**

ABOUT THE AWARD

Mary Utne O'Brien joined CASEL as Associate Director in 1999 after many years of leading public health research studies in Chicago. Working closely with CASEL President Roger Weissberg, Mary quickly became a key leader not just for CASEL but for the entire field of social and emotional learning. In 2004 she was appointed as CASEL's Executive Director. When CASEL incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in 2007, she became Vice President for Strategic Initiatives, responsible for strategic planning, development of collaborative partnerships, and exploration of new projects. Mary believed in the importance of highly disciplined experimental and action research, partnerships with schools throughout the country, and effective policymaking related to social and emotional learning at all levels. In her view, these were essential tools to support and demonstrate the impact of social and emotional learning not only on children's learning and development but also on school functioning and practice. Through the Mary Utne O'Brien Awards, CASEL honors her memory and continues on a course to make her dream a reality.

MARY UTNE O'BRIEN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN EXPANDING THE EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

CONGRESSMAN DALE KILDEE

Together with two other members of the House of Representatives, Congressman Tim Ryan (D, Ohio) and Congresswoman Judy Biggert (R, Illinois), Congressman Dale Kildee (D, Illinois) sponsored HR 4223, the Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Act of 2009. This groundbreaking legislation would have established a national training and technical assistance center for social and emotional learning; competitive grants to states and school districts to establish social and emotional learning leadership teams, plans, and other tools to implement and sustain social and emotional learning; and an independent national evaluation of school-based social and emotional learning. We are grateful to Congressman Kildee for his leadership and his understanding of the importance of social and emotional learning to children's success in school and life.

MARY UTNE O'BRIEN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN EXPANDING THE EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

CONGRESSWOMAN JUDY BIGGERT

Congresswoman Judy Biggert provided the essential bi-partisan leadership to make the Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Act of 2009 meaningful and important to her Republican colleagues. A lifelong Illinois resident, she combines a wealth of experience as a legislator, lawyer, community leader, and small business owner. She began her legislative career in 1992, when she was elected to the Illinois House of Representatives to serve the newly created 81st District. A lifetime of community service prepared her for the challenges of public office. She served as President of the Board of Education of Hinsdale Township High School District 86 and Chairman of the Village of Hinsdale Plan Commission, and as an officer and volunteer in a host of community agencies and organizations. She is a graduate of Stanford University and Northwestern University School of Law.