

SEARCH INSTITUTE TO ACCEPT GREAT FRIEND TO KIDS AWARD

— Association of Children's Museums Recognizes the Global Innovator for Discovering
What Children and Adolescents Need to Thrive at InterActivity 2010 —

ARLINGTON, VA — The Association of Children's Museums (ACM) will present its *Great Friend to Kids Award* to Search Institute at 9:00 a.m. on Sat, May 8, at the Crowne Plaza St. Paul – Riverfront Hotel. The *Great Friend to Kids Award* is presented annually at ACM's InterActivity conference and honors organizations and individuals that have made significant contributions to strengthening education and advancing the interests of children. Search Institute was selected for its trailblazing, high-quality research and evaluation that deepens public knowledge of young people, what they need and how to care for and work with them effectively.

Members of the media are welcome to attend the *Great Friend to Kids Award* plenary session; contact ACM to obtain a media pass or for interview requests.

“What sets Search Institute apart is its emphasis on *positive* child and youth development,” says ACM Executive Director Janet Rice Elman. “While it is important to identify negative factors, it is critical to track and promote proactive measures that caregivers can take to light a young person's spark.”

Founded in 1958, Search Institute is an independent, nonprofit, nonsectarian organization with a mission to provide leadership, knowledge and resources to promote healthy children, youth and communities. Its innovative, research-based Developmental Assets framework is the most widely recognized approach to positive child and youth development in the United States and, increasingly, around the world. Now organized by age group (for children ages 0-18), Developmental Assets influences state and national public policy in education, juvenile justice, public health and substance abuse prevention among other fields. Celebrating more than 50 years, Search Institute is on the crest of breaking new ground, working with culture-changing organizations and communities to learn together about the intersection of assets, community and social change and the full spectrum of human development.

Peter L. Benson, Ph.D., president and CEO of Search Institute, will accept the *Great Friend to Kids Award* on behalf of the organization. During the award ceremony, Dr. Benson will provide a keynote address on the Institute's latest research and its holistic approach for positive youth development.

Dr. Benson is the author or editor of more than a dozen books on child and adolescent development and social change, including, most recently, *Sparks: How Parents Can Help Ignite the Hidden Strengths of Teenagers*. Dr. Benson's work has inspired and guided more than 500 community-based initiatives in 45 states, every Canadian province and on six continents. His insight, vision and passion have made him a widely sought speaker, writer and consultant for major national and international events, organizations and policy initiatives.

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ACM initiated the *ACM Great Friend to Kids Award* in 1991. Past recipients include Boys and Girls Clubs of America (2009), for its commitment to providing kids safe places to play and mentors who care about their future; Dr. Joe L. Frost (2008), the early architects of Head Start program, Dr. Bettye Caldwell, Dr. Julius B. Richmond and Dr. Edward F. Zigler (2007), Dr. T. Berry Brazelton (2006), Erikson Institute (2005), Kevin Clash (2004), Barbara Bush (2003), UNICEF (2002), Dr. David Elkind (2001), Dr. Robert Coles (2000), Children's Television Workshop (1999), Hillary Rodham Clinton (1998), Dr. James P. Comer (1997), Fred Rogers (1996), Dr. Ernest L. Boyer (1995), Peggy Charren (1994), Marian Wright Edelman (1993), Dr. Howard Gardner (1992), and Michael Spock (1991).

More than 600 participants from museums, universities, and architecture and design firms among other organizations are expected to attend *InterActivity 2010: Invest Early • Inspire Growth*, which runs May 6-8. Minnesota Children's Museum will serve as the local host for the conference. *InterActivity 2010* programming will showcase the best education, outreach, partnerships, research, exhibits and environments from the international children's museum field that supports a solid foundation for children.

Additional keynote speakers for the conference include Dr. Johnnetta Cole, anthropologist, director of the National Museum of African Art and former college president, who will share her thoughts on strengthening diversity and inclusion (Thursday, May 6); and Dan Pallotta, founder of Pallotta TeamWorks and author of *Uncharitable*, who will discuss how nonprofits can grow by challenging conventional wisdom (Friday, May 7).

ACM is a member service organization for children's museums around the world. ACM's mission is to build the capacity of children's museums to serve as town squares for children and families where play inspires creativity and lifelong learning. There are approximately 400 children's museums internationally. Children's museums reach more than 31 million annually. For links to ACM's international list of museums and more information about *InterActivity 2010*, visit www.ChildrensMuseums.org.

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