

October 3, 2011

Senator Jonathan Courtney Receives Legislative Advocacy Award

On September 21, Senator Jonathan Courtney received a Legislative Advocacy Award from the Maine Association for Community Service Providers (MACSP) for his state-wide efforts to ensure that the services necessary to provide the critical supports to children and adults with developmental disabilities remain viable through the difficult economic climate that our state is experiencing.

MACSP is a collaboration of 70 organizations that collectively provide essential services to over 4,000 people with disabilities throughout Maine. Also receiving legislative advocacy awards were Senator Justin Alford, Representative Mark Eves, Representative Mary Nelson, and Daniel Shagoury. Representative Patrick Flood and Richard Farnsworth, the recently retired Executive Director of Woodford's Family Services received a Life-Time Achievement Award.

Senator Courtney's award was presented by Neal Meltzer, the President of MACSP and the Executive Director of WABAN PROJECTS. As part of his introduction, Meltzer spoke of Senator Courtney's efforts through the years to advocate for people with disabilities including his hosting of numerous tours of the State House for individuals served by WABAN and Speaking Up For Us (SUFU) a self-advocacy group.

However, it was Senator Courtney's recent work in preventing the elimination of Early Intervention Services that was deemed particularly noteworthy. During the last legislative session, critically needed and federally mandated Early Intervention Services to thousands of preschool children with special needs were threatened with elimination. According to Meltzer, "It was Senator Courtney who, in the heat of working to get the State budget passed, was able to pull together meetings with Senate President Kevin Raye, House Speaker Nutting, and the Commissioners of DHHS and DOE, and it was through his persistence and tenacity that solutions were put in place. Jon exemplifies the type of champion that selflessly gives to others and by doing so lights thousands of candles of hope for those in need."

Photo caption: Neal Meltzer, MACSP President and Executive Director of Waban Projects (left) presents Legislative Advocacy Award to Senator Jonathan Courtney (right).
