

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
National Institutes of Health

Eunice Kennedy Shriver  
National Institute of Child Health  
and Human Development

An Event To Honor  
**Eunice  
Kennedy  
Shriver**



**45** Years of Human Development Research  
Advancing Science—Enriching Lives



NICHD 2008

ADVANCING SCIENCE — ENRICHING LIVES

## Forty-five years ago,

Eunice Kennedy Shriver's vision and unrelenting advocacy were instrumental in establishing the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) as the central research entity for investigating human development across the life process as a way of improving pregnancy outcomes and fostering the healthy development of children, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Together with Dr. Robert E. Cooke, her friend and scientific advisor to President John F. Kennedy, Mrs. Shriver was the driving force behind the establishment of the Institute. Today, the NICHD conducts and supports research on all stages of human development, from preconception through adulthood, to better understand the health of children, adults, families, and communities.

As we commemorate the NICHD's 45th anniversary, we are honored to have the Institute's name expanded by Congress to acknowledge the contributions of Eunice Kennedy Shriver, without whom the Institute would not have been founded. In addition, the NICHD is pleased to induct Mrs. Shriver into its Hall of Honor, which was initiated to recognize people whose accomplishments with or on behalf of the Institute are especially noteworthy. To acknowledge Mrs. Shriver's significant contributions to the research field of intellectual and developmental disabilities, the Institute is also designating its flagship research centers program as the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers program.

The success of the NICHD relies on the contributions not only from all its employees, but also from its grantees, advisors, and members of the public who champion its mission. Thank you for joining us at this special event to honor Mrs. Shriver for her dedication to the NICHD and the people it serves.

Sincerely,

Duane Alexander, M.D.  
Director, NICHD

## Renaming the Institute's Flagship Research Centers Program

Among the recommendations of the 1961 President's Committee on Mental Retardation were the establishment of University-Affiliated Facilities to train personnel to help care for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities and the construction of 12 Mental Retardation Research Centers, on university campuses rather than at institutions, to provide facilities and a focus for research. Among the NICHD's first orders of business following its establishment in 1962 was to initiate the Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers Program. The Program has continued, without pause, since that time and has helped foster significant advances in understanding the causes of and factors that contribute to intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as great progress in understanding how best to care for those with these disabilities to ensure they achieve their full potential.

To commemorate Mrs. Shriver's dedication in establishing the NICHD and in initiating this flagship research centers program as part of her role on the Institute's first federal National Advisory Child Health and Human Development Council, the NICHD formally renames this program as the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers*. The Program will continue its invaluable work in the name of its founding advocate.



**EUNICE KENNEDY SHRIVER**

Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation  
Special Olympics

**For her vision and unrelenting advocacy for establishing a new NIH Institute for research on improving pregnancy outcomes and fostering healthy development of children, as part of her lifelong dedication to improving the lives of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, recognized by the U.S. Congress by naming the Institute she championed the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development**

As executive vice president of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation and founder and honorary chairperson of Special Olympics, Eunice Kennedy Shriver has been a leader in the worldwide effort to improve and enhance the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities for most of her life. Her efforts were instrumental in the establishment of the NICHD and in the initiation of the Institute's Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers program, which has supported research on issues relevant to intellectual and developmental disabilities since the 1960s.

Born in Massachusetts, the fifth of nine children of Joseph P. and Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy, Mrs. Shriver received a B.S. in sociology from Stanford University. After working for the U.S. Department of State, the Penitentiary for Women (Alderson, West Virginia), and Chicago Juvenile Court, she took over the direction of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation in 1957.

After her brother, John F. Kennedy, was elected President, Mrs. Shriver's leadership helped to

establish the President's Committee on Mental Retardation in 1961. It had been Mrs. Shriver who convinced the Kennedy family to reveal publicly that one of the Kennedy children—Rosemary—had an intellectual disability, bringing national attention to the issue of recognizing the potential of and ensuring opportunities for these individuals. Mrs. Shriver's unrelenting efforts led President Kennedy to request legislation, passed by Congress in 1962, to establish a new National Institute of Child Health and Human Development within the National Institutes of Health to "encourage imaginative research into the complex processes of human development, from conception to old age." The Institute would be the primary funding source for research on intellectual disabilities and birth defects, a previously neglected field of research. Mrs. Shriver served on the NICHD's first federal National Advisory Child Health and Human Development Council and, during her tenure, the NICHD initiated its Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers program to provide university-based facilities for research on intellectual and developmental disabilities.

As leader of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, Mrs. Shriver founded the Special Olympics in 1968 to "demonstrate that people with [intellectual and developmental disabilities] are capable of remarkable achievements in sports, education, employment, and beyond." Her efforts also led to the creation of major centers for the study of medical ethics at Harvard and Georgetown Universities (1971), the creation of the "Community of Caring" concept for the reduction of intellectual disabilities among babies of teenagers (1981), the institution of 16 "Communities of Caring" model centers in 1982, and the later establishment of "Community of Caring" programs in 1,200 public and private schools (1990–2006).

Today, Special Olympics is a global movement with more than 150 countries participating. With Mrs. Shriver's vision of a world of respect without requirements, victory without conquest, and pride without prejudice, hundreds of programs and organizations have been created to support those with disabilities in achieving their full potential. These include the University Centers on Disabilities/University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, the Best Buddies® program, the American Association of People with Disabilities, and Special Olympics Unified Sports®, to name only a few.

As a result of her efforts to secure the rights of and respect for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, Mrs. Shriver has received many honors and awards, including the Philip Murray-William Green Award (presented to Eunice and Sargent Shriver by the AFL-CIO, 1966), the French Legion of Honor (1973), the Mary Lasker Award (1973), the American Association on Mental Deficiency Humanitarian Award (1973), the Priz de la Couronne Francaise (1974), the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1984), the Laureus Sports Award (2000), the Surgeon General's Medallion (2001), the National Collegiate Athletic Association Theodore Roosevelt Award (2002), and the Olympic Order Award from the International Olympic Committee (2002), among others.

By Act of Congress:  
**Eunice Kennedy Shriver National  
Institute of Child Health and Human  
Development (NICHD)**

The 1960s ushered in a “new frontier” in which science and its potential for improving people’s lives were a major focus. During this time, Eunice Kennedy Shriver began her lifelong role as an advocate for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Mrs. Shriver’s unrelenting efforts led to the establishment of the President’s Committee on Mental Retardation in 1961, and then to the establishment of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development within the National Institutes of Health in 1962. The NICHD became the primary funding source for research on intellectual and developmental disabilities and birth defects, opened the doors to research in this field on medical school campuses, created a new pediatrics subspecialty, and established mental retardation as a major field of research.

By act of Congress (Public Law 110-154) on December 21, 2007, the Institute was renamed the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development* in honor of Mrs. Shriver’s vision and dedication. The NICHD formally recognizes the Institute’s renaming and Mrs. Shriver’s contributions to the Institute’s founding at this very special event.

ADVANCING SCIENCE — ENRICHING LIVES

NICHD 2008

## NICHD HALL OF HONOR MEMBERS

**Gary S. Becker, Ph.D.**

*University of Chicago*

**Maria I. New, M.D.**

*Mount Sinai School of Medicine*

**Ralph Brinster, V.M.D., Ph.D.**

*University of Pennsylvania*

**Craig T. Ramey, Ph.D.**

*Georgetown University*

**Stanley Cohen, Ph.D.**

*Vanderbilt University*

**John B. Robbins, M.D.**

*Intramural Research Program, NICHD*

**Robert E. Cooke, M.D., FAAP**

*Johns Hopkins University*

**Rachel Schneerson, M.D.**

*Intramural Research Program, NICHD*

**Delbert A. Fisher, M.D.**

*University of California, Los Angeles*

**Judith Vaitukaitis, M.D.**

*Office of the Director, NIH*

**William Gahl, M.D., Ph.D.**

*National Human Genome Research  
Institute, NIH*

**Stephen T. Warren, Ph.D.**

*Emory University*

**Roger Guillemin, M.D., Ph.D.**

*Salk Institute*

**Eric Wieschaus, Ph.D.**

*Princeton University*

**Edward B. Lewis, Ph.D.**

*California Institute of Technology*

**Ryuzo Yanagimachi, Ph.D.**

*University of Hawaii*

## SPECIAL THANKS

*The NICHD would like to give special thanks*

*to all those who make its research possible—the patients*

*and families, whose contributions and sacrifices have*

*allowed others to live and to thrive.*

Many photos used during this event were provided courtesy of Special Olympics International.

