The 1993 Society for Community Research and Action Award for Distinguished Practice in Community Psychology: Maurice J. Elias

Maurice J. Elias

Editor's Note: Maurice J. Elias was honored at the 101st annual meeting of the American Psychological Association in Toronto, Canada, August 1993. Dr. Elias received the Award for Distinguished Practice in Community Psychology, a career award given annually by the Society for Community Research and Action: The Division of Community Psychology of the American Psychological Association. His invited address was preceded by an introduction researched and written by James G. Kelly. (The award address was delivered by Edison J. Trickett.)
ACKNOWLEDGING MAURICE ELIAS

The practice of community psychology makes it possible for us to give meaning — personal and professional meaning — to the field of community psychology. The words "implementation" and "ownership," for example, would be pious, and presumptuous without our knowledge about practice.

Maurice Elias is an exemplar of practice. He now joins the other previous exemplars who have received the Distinguished Practice Award from the Community Society For Research in Action. The other recipients are: first in 1983, Saul Cooper, then in order Carolyn Swift, Tom Wolfe, Tony Broskowski, Don Klein, Bett Tableman, Frank Reissman, John Morgan, Beverly Long, and David Chavis.

Maurice is being acknowledged for a broad range of activities but most importantly for his investment in developing, evaluating, and implementing the social problem-solving curriculum, Social Decision Making Skills.

His investment in prevention and social problem solving has been enormous! He has working relationships with at least 38 school systems to implement the Social Decision Making Skills curriculum. His recent book, Building Social Problem-Solving Skills, co-authored with John Clabby, is a rich resource for anyone who wishes to introduce and implement a social innovation with local school systems.

Roger Weissberg, who has known Maurice for 17 years, appraises Maurice's work as follows:

For my money, Maurice is the world's pre-eminent scholar in the area of school-based social-competence promotion (SB-SCP) research. He has made noteworthy contributions to SB-SCP theory, research, and practice. He has written several important books and many articles about how educators and parents can promote the adaptive social behavior of children and adolescents through social problem-solving and decision-making training. He has developed state-of-the-art social competence assessment measures and training programs. He has conducted several important empirical studies that (a) examine relationships between social competence measures and adjustment, as well as (b) assess the short- and long-term effects of SCP training on students' cognition and behavior.

Maurice's work has been recognized by the National Mental Health Association. In 1988 he received the Lela Rowland Prevention Award from the Association for excellence in prevention programming. In 1990 the SPS Program was validated by the U. S. Department of Education as an exemplary program and is available to public and private schools across the country through the National Diffusion Network (NDN).