

Erikson Institute

Erikson Institute's 2019 Luncheon will honor Sara Crown Star and Dr. Sakena Yacoobi
Tickets are still available for this year's event, which will take place October 22



CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, October 14, 2019 - The 2019 Spirit of Erikson Luncheon, taking place Tuesday, October 22 at the Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel, will honor early childhood advocates and celebrate Erikson Institute's commitment to better the lives of young children and families. The lunch and program will begin at noon, and tickets/tables are available for purchase at erikson.edu/luncheon.

The 2019 Spirit of Erikson honoree is long-time Erikson trustee **Sara Crown Star**. The award recognizes superior volunteer accomplishments that have brought significant and lasting change for the children, families, and communities that Erikson serves. For over two decades, Star has been a director of Crown Family Philanthropies, which supports strategic funding in the Jewish, health and human services, environment, education and global healthcare sectors. As President of SCS Innovations, Star also invests in entrepreneurial companies focused on improving healthcare and education. Star has been an Erikson Trustee since 1992 and was

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recruited to Erikson by businessman and philanthropist Irving Harris. She will be introduced at the program by her father, civic leader and businessman **Lester Crown**.

The event's keynote address will be delivered by [Dr. Sakena Yacoobi](#), CEO of the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL), which she founded in 1995. Dr. Yacoobi's mission became clear in the early 1990s when she realized the lack of education and health care faced by the Afghan people after decades of war and strife. When many all-female schools across the country were closed, AIL began operating 80 underground home schools for 3,000 young girls. They now serve 350,000+ women and children each year through their Educational Learning Centers, schools, and clinics in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"Erikson is thrilled to highlight recent advancements in the field of early childhood education and to honor two women who contribute so much to young people in their communities," said **Geoffrey Nagle**, President and CEO of Erikson Institute. "The luncheon provides an opportunity for us to collectively celebrate the impact dedicated individuals and organizations can have on social change."

As the nation's premier graduate school in early childhood development for more than 50 years, Erikson has been a trailblazer in educating teachers, social workers, and other practitioners in the importance of the first years of life. The Institute also provides direct services to thousands of young children and families, influences childhood policy through fellowship programs and community data projects, and conducts applied research that informs the field. The annual luncheon, which serves as Erikson's primary fundraising event, fuels the institution's critical work as a leader in the field of early childhood education.

Erikson is grateful for the Luncheon's planning committee, who represent a cross-section of individuals committed to the Institute's mission: Rick Chesley (Luncheon Chair), Eric Adelstein,

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Sabrina Gracias, John L. Hines, Lori Laser, Diane Goldstick Meagher, Kate Neisser, Ashley Hemphill Netzky, Kathy Richland Pick, Cari B. Sacks, and Sandy Sterling.

For more information on Erikson's 2019 Luncheon, or for tickets and tables, please visit

<https://www.erikson.edu/luncheon/>

Erikson Institute educates, inspires, and promotes leadership to serve the needs of children and families. We have the premier graduate school dedicated to child development. We provide direct services to our community's most vulnerable children and families. We are leaders in influencing early childhood policy. We work tirelessly every day so that all children can achieve optimal educational, social, emotional, and physical well-being. At Erikson Institute, we know that investing in the early years of children will last a lifetime.

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