



Media Release

## Jacobs Foundation announces laureates of the Klaus J. Jacobs Awards endowed with 1.2 million Swiss francs

- The Klaus J. Jacobs Research Prize 2011 goes to Professor Michael Tomasello, Director of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany
- The Klaus J. Jacobs Best Practice Award 2011 is bestowed upon Christiane Daepf, founder of the Swiss program "Ideenbüro"

Zurich, October 13, 2011: The Zurich-based Jacobs Foundation, an international foundation in the field of child and youth development, has announced the laureates of the two Klaus J. Jacobs Awards 2011, endowed with a total of 1.2 million Swiss francs. The developmental psychologist Professor Michael Tomasello is the recipient of this year's Research Prize, while the Best Practice Award goes to the founder of the Swiss program "Ideenbüro", Christiane Daepf. Both prizes will be presented during an awards ceremony on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2011 at the University of Zurich.

### **Born to cooperate**

The central findings of Professor Michael Tomasello's research show that even one-year-old children who cannot yet speak are capable of cooperating and helping other children. This behaviour exists without being taught by adults. Professor Tomasello's comparative research into communicative behaviour and learning processes of preschool-aged children on the one hand, and those of the great apes on the other, provides evidence that humans are born to cooperate – and that this is a primary difference between humans and great apes. Young children do not perceive space, quantity or logical correlations any better than great apes do, but they are able to learn more easily with others and can recognize the intentions of others more quickly. This is the primary basis for the ability to speak. The Klaus J. Jacobs Research Prize 2011, endowed with 1 million Swiss francs is a spur for Professor Michael Tomasello's future work in his research field: "The money allows you to do some research things that you wouldn't otherwise be able to do. In particular, it allows you to plan larger research projects with a greater time horizon."

### **Cooperation at school – Schoolchildren acting as problem-solvers for fellow pupils**

During her career as a teacher, Christiane Daepf realized that children are excellent listeners and problem solvers. On the basis of this knowledge, Christiane Daepf founded "Ideenbüro", a program in which schoolchildren help their fellow pupils solve problems. "Small children are impressed by older children and depend on their behavior rather than listen to well-intentioned advices of adults", explains

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Christiane Daepf. "This is the reason why consultations at the Ideenbüro are so efficient and effective." The "Ideenbüro" is the contact point in a school for all types of problems, ranging from bullying and vandalism to the troubles that arise in pupil-teacher interaction. The children in charge of the "Ideenbüro" take responsibility for solving problems independently and participating in the social community.

### **The Klaus J. Jacobs Awards**

In honour of its founder, the entrepreneur Klaus J. Jacobs, who passed away in 2008, the Jacobs Foundation has awarded two annual prizes since 2009. Endowed with a total of 1.2 million Swiss francs, the prizes recognize exceptional achievements in research and practice in the field of child and youth development. The Klaus J. Jacobs Research Prize acknowledges scientific work of high social relevance to the development of children and young people. The Jacobs Foundation attaches great importance to scientific findings from interdisciplinary research which can yield practical applications. The Klaus J. Jacobs Best Practice Award recognizes the exceptional commitment of institutions or individuals who put innovative solutions in the field of child and youth development into practice. The Best Practice Award is endowed with 200,000 Swiss francs.

### **Information for the media**

Photos of the laureates of the Klaus J. Jacobs Awards 2011 are available under [www.jacobsfoundation.org](http://www.jacobsfoundation.org)

### **About the Jacobs Foundation**

The Zurich-based private Jacobs Foundation was established in 1988 by entrepreneur Klaus J. Jacobs. Ever since, the foundation has focused its efforts on the development of children and youth. The Jacobs Foundation supports research projects, intervention programs and scientific institutions with 35 million Swiss francs per year. As far as its methods and approaches are concerned, the foundation is particularly committed to scientific excellence and evidence-based findings. With its investment of EUR 200 million in the Jacobs University Bremen in Germany (2006), it set new standards in the area of private funding.

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