



# America's Winners

## Distinguished Americans Selected As Heinz Award Honorees

(NAPSA)—A New York physician who is working to transform the nation's system of care for the elderly is among five recipients of the 2006 Heinz Awards.

Dr. William Thomas, founder of the Eden Alternative, a program turning antiseptic assisted-living facilities from lonely, hopeless, tedious institutions into vibrant centers of care and companionship, has been selected to receive the \$250,000 award in the category of the Human Condition.

Now in their 12th year, the Heinz Awards are among the largest individual achievement prizes in the world. Presented in five categories, the awards honor the work of the late U.S. Sen. John Heinz, for whom they are named.

Following graduation from Harvard Medical School, Dr. Thomas began his medical career at a New York nursing home where he was struck by the pervasive unhappiness of its residents. He concluded that most residents suffered from three plagues—loneliness, helplessness and boredom—and that the facilities themselves were serving more as hospitals than homes.

With his diagnosis in hand, Dr. Thomas set out to resuscitate the industry in 1991 with the creation of the Eden Alternative, an organization that has sparked nothing short of a revolution in nursing home care.

The Eden Alternative seeks to alter the experience of the aging, a demographic segment in this country that numbers 35 million people



Jim Harrison/Heinz Family Foundation

**Dr. William Thomas, founder of the Eden Alternative and recipient of the 2006 Heinz Award in the Human Condition category, at his home in Sherburne, NY.**

and is expected to double by 2030. By creating coalitions of people—staff and residents—that are dedicated to creating livable habitats for human beings rather than facilities for the frail, Dr. Thomas' organization is creating environments where residents are healthier and happier.

To date, more than 300 nursing homes across the country have been "Edenized" with bright décor, gardens, pets and on-site day care for kids.

The other Heinz Award recipients in their respective categories are:

- Arts and Humanities: James Nachtwey, global photographer and photojournalist from New York City.

- Environment: Paul Anastas, Ph.D., chemist and founder and director of the Green Chemistry Institute from Alexandria, Va.

- Public Policy: Bruce Katz, attorney, urban policy expert and founder of the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution from Washington, D.C.

- Technology, the Economy and Employment: Leroy Hood, Ph.D., M.D., genomic biologist, inventor and president of the Institute for Systems Biology from Seattle.

A legendary though largely unheralded nursing home reformer also is being honored with the foundation's Chairman's Medal, which is awarded periodically to acknowledge a lifetime of especially notable achievement. This year's recipient is Elma Holder, founder of the National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform.

"These remarkable awardees demonstrate the tremendous power for positive change that happens when one individual believes he or she can make a difference," said Teresa Heinz, widow of the late Senator Heinz and chairman of the Heinz Family Foundation. "They have the creativity and imagination to dream big—but they have followed that with enough hard work and determination to turn those dreams into reality. In so doing, they have made a better world."

To learn more about the awards, the nomination process and past winners, visit the Web site at [www.heinzawards.net](http://www.heinzawards.net).