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**Pioneering Foster Care Advocate Honored with
\$250,000 Heinz Award for the Human Condition**

Dr. Brenda Krause Eheart recognized for creating innovative, community-based model for adoptive families and senior citizens

PITTSBURGH, September 9, 2008 – A pioneering foster care advocate and former university researcher whose breakthrough model of community living was created to address the inherent failures within the traditional system of adopting children out of foster care has been selected to receive the 14th annual Heinz Award for the Human Condition, among the largest individual achievement prizes in the world.

Dr. Brenda Krause Eheart, 64, of Champaign, Ill., the founder of Generations of Hope and the intergenerational community, Hope Meadows, where foster children, their adoptive parents and senior citizens live as neighbors, is among five distinguished Americans selected to receive one of the \$250,000 awards, presented by the Heinz Family Foundation.

“Brenda Eheart has advanced a truly transformational solution to a confounding issue – the nation’s anachronistic system of foster care adoption,” said Teresa Heinz, chairman of the Heinz Family Foundation. “Her innovative model of multigenerational community living is not only helping find permanent, caring homes for many of America’s foster children, but by engaging and involving senior citizens within the community, she is enriching the quality of life for everyone involved. Dr. Eheart has succeeded in breaking down walls – real and metaphorical –

that have segregated those who can truly benefit from one another's support and love. She is a most deserving recipient of this year's Heinz Award for the Human Condition."

In founding Generations of Hope, Dr. Eheart has established an innovative model for mutual support that has provided a renewed sense of meaning for countless Americans. Her dream of creating a place where children – particularly the more than 129,000 children waiting in foster care to be adopted in the United States – would be adopted by caring parents who would themselves be supported by fulltime therapists and psychologists, has grown in size and scope. By incorporating seniors into her vision, she has given birth to an innovative and vibrant paradigm of interdependent community living, one which fosters a caring and supportive environment for all.

After adopting her infant son from Peru, Dr. Eheart (at the time with the University of Illinois and a specialist in behavioral sciences and sociology) conducted a 10-year study on adoption and the foster care system in Illinois, interviewing families that had adopted some of the older wards of the state. Her research found that foster children were typically placed in multiple homes before age 18, a situation due largely to a lack of social and emotional support. In fact, half of the nation's foster children who age out of foster care never finish high school, a third go on welfare and a quarter become homeless.

Such statistics propelled her in 1994 to found Generations of Hope, creating a breakthrough model that works like this: In exchange for agreeing to take in three to four children, adoptive families live rent-free in six-bedroom, two-bathroom homes, with the stay-at-home parent receiving a modest salary. More experienced foster and adoptive parents mentor newer families. The seniors in the community pay monthly rent – about \$100 below market rates – for their three-bedroom apartments. Therapists, social workers and counselors work on site with the foster and adoptive families. The diverse neighborhood creates intergenerational friendships that benefit residents of all ages, and it is these relationships, according to Dr. Eheart, that are the key to the community's success.

Today, there are a dozen families, including 50 children (biological, foster and adopted) and approximately 60 seniors living at Hope Meadows, an 80-home neighborhood on 22 acres located at a former Air Force base in Rantoul, Ill. The model has met with so much success over the years that it is being replicated in other states, including California, Florida, Ohio and Oregon.

“Far too many children, youth and young adults in this nation are growing up without the benefit of a supportive family and community,” Eheart said. “Generations of Hope is addressing this unmet need by realizing the promise of ordinary people. Using the innate capacity of people of all ages to care for each other, it is shifting the primary focus of problem solving from professionals to the members of the community. I am very grateful to the Heinz Family Foundation for their recognition of this work.”

Since 1993, the Heinz Family Foundation of Pittsburgh has recognized individuals whose dedication, skill and generosity of spirit represent the best of the human qualities that the late Senator Heinz, for whom the award is named, held so dear.

Presented in five categories, the other Heinz Award recipients are:

- **Arts and Humanities: Ann Hamilton**, 52, visual artist and educator, from Columbus, Ohio
- **Environment: Thomas FitzGerald**, 53, founder and director of the Kentucky Resources Council, from Louisville, Ky.
- **Public Policy: Robert Greenstein**, 62, founder and executive director of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, from Washington, D.C.
- **Technology, the Economy and Employment: Joseph DeRisi**, Ph.D., 38, molecular biologist, researcher and inventor, from San Francisco, Calif.

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About the Heinz Foundation

The Heinz Family Foundation, one of the Heinz Family Philanthropies, began as a charitable trust established by the late Senator Heinz in 1984. His widow, Teresa Heinz, created the Heinz Awards in 1993 as the primary activity of the foundation. In addition to the Heinz Awards, the foundation directs a grant-making program that is active in a wide range of issues, principally those concerning women's health and environment, health care cost and coverage, as well as pensions and retirement security.

Nominations for the Heinz Awards are submitted by an invited Council of Nominators, all experts in their fields, who serve anonymously. Award recipients are selected by the board of directors for the Heinz Awards upon recommendation by a blue-ribbon panel of jurors in each category.

Past recipients of the Heinz Awards include author Dave Eggers, personal computer inventor Steve Wozniak, energy authority Amory Lovins, gerontologist Robert Butler, medical anthropologist Paul Farmer, global warming scientist James Hansen, marine biologist Jane Lubchenco and Paul Anastas, a leader in the "green chemistry" movement.

In addition to the \$250,000 award for their unrestricted use, recipients are presented with a medallion inscribed with the image of Senator Heinz on one side and a rendering of a globe passing between two hands on the other. The medallion symbolizes the partnership, continuity and values carried on to the next generation. The hands also suggest passing on the stewardship of the earth to future generations.

The Heinz Awards will be presented at a private ceremony in Pittsburgh on October 21.

Additional information is available online at www.heinzawards.net.

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