

B612 Foundation Announces Inaugural Schweickart Prize Winner

Joe DeMartini, an astronomy Ph.D. student at the University of Maryland (UMD), is awarded the Schweickart Prize for his outstanding leadership and innovative planetary defense proposal.

San Francisco, June 28, 2024 /PRnewswire/ – [B612 Foundation](#) announces today the first Schweickart Prize will be awarded to Joe DeMartini, an astronomy Ph.D. at the University of Maryland (UMD), for his outstanding twilight observing campaign proposal. The prestigious prize will be presented by Apollo 9 astronaut Rusty Schweickart at a special ceremony at the [Chabot Space & Science Center](#) in Oakland, California.

[Joe DeMartini](#) has been selected for his innovative approach to enhance the discovery of Near Earth Objects (NEOs) that have the potential to impact our planet. His SUNward NEO Surveillance and Early Twilight detection (SUNSET) Collaboration proposal promises to make important contributions to the field of planetary defense by improving the detection and confirmation of NEOs (aka asteroids) during twilight hours. Read the proposal [here](#).

"We are honored to present the inaugural Schweickart Prize to Joe DeMartini," said Rusty Schweickart, co-founder of B612 Foundation and Apollo 9 astronaut. "Joe's proposal exemplifies the forward-thinking and scientific rigor this award seeks to recognize. His work will play a crucial role in advancing our knowledge and preparedness in the realm of planetary defense."



The Schweickart Prize, named in honor of Rusty Schweickart, recognizes graduate students for their innovative ideas and potential leadership in advancing planetary defense-related fields. The prize includes a \$10,000 grant in recognition of their idea or concept to support the recipient's research and career development. It also includes a museum-quality award with an authenticated meteorite.

Joe DeMartini's SUNSET proposal seeks to establish a network of ground-based observatories to advocate for and provide follow-up support for the proposed Vera C. Rubin Observatory

low-solar-elongation twilight microsurvey. The Rubin Observatory has the capability to conduct detailed surveys during twilight, a critical time for observing objects closer to the sun that would be missed during regular night-time observations. In addition to increasing the monitored region of the inner solar system, DeMartini proposes to leverage recent advances in NEO verification methods to confirm discoveries in this infrequently observed population of asteroids. This SUNSET community/Rubin Observatory collaboration has the potential to make important contributions and increase discoveries in this undersampled population of potentially hazardous asteroids.

"I am deeply honored to receive the Schweickart Prize," said Joe DeMartini. "This recognition underscores the importance of global cooperation to advance our techniques for asteroid detection and planetary defense. I am grateful for the support and look forward to continuing this vital work."

“The founding sponsors who have generously funded the Schweickart Prize program include [Anousheh Ansari](#), [Barringer Crater Company](#), [Future Ventures](#), [Geoffrey Notkin](#), [Jurvetson Family Foundation](#), [Meteor Crater](#), Randy Schweickart and Michelle Heng, and Rusty B. Schweickart and Joanne Keys” said Danica Remy, President of B612 Foundation.

The award ceremony will occur on June 29th, 2024, at 3:30 pm at the [Chabot Space & Science Center](#) in Oakland, California. The event will feature a presentation by Rusty Schweickart and comments from NASA astronauts [Steve Smith](#), [Nicole Stott](#), and YouTuber [Scott Manley](#). Admission tickets can be purchased [here](#).

About B612 Foundation and the Schweickart Prize

The Schweickart Prize, a program of B612 Foundation, is an annual award to foster a new generation of leaders in planetary defense and to encourage ideas to help protect Earth from potential asteroid impacts. The prize is named after Russell “Rusty” Schweickart, renowned Apollo 9 astronaut, co-founder of the Association of Space Explorers and co-founder of B612 Foundation. For more information, visit [Schweickartprize.org](#).

Since 2002, B612 Foundation has developed tools and technologies to understand, map, and navigate our solar system and protect our planet from asteroid impacts through its Asteroid Institute program and supporting educational programs, including Asteroid Day and the Schweickart Prize. [Founding Circle](#) and [Asteroid Circle](#) members and individual donors from 46 countries support the work financially. For more information, visit [B612foundation.org](#) or follow on social: [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Linkedin](#)

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Chabot Space and Science Center June 29, 2024 local press & event information
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