

EMBARGOED till 12:01 am EST June 23rd

B612 Foundation Announces 2026 Winner of the Schweickart Prize

*University of Edinburgh Researchers Brian P. Murphy and Richard E. Cannon
Recognized for Proposal to Expand Planetary Defense to Humanity's New Frontiers*

SAN FRANCISCO – June 23, 2026 /PRNewswire/ – B612 Foundation announced the recipient of the annual Schweickart Prize. This year's honor goes to a proposal calling for planetary defense to extend beyond Earth's surface, encompassing the rapidly expanding network of critical infrastructure throughout cislunar space. The Prize, a program of B612, recognizes original student proposals seeking to advance humanity's understanding of and preparedness for asteroid impacts.

"Rusty Schweickart taught us that planetary defense is ultimately an act of stewardship," said Danica Remy, President of B612 and co-founder of Asteroid Day. "This year's winning proposal challenges us to think beyond protecting life and assets on the surface of the Earth and to consider how we safeguard the infrastructure and communities humanity will depend on throughout the Earth-Moon system. It is exactly the kind of bold, forward-looking thinking the Schweickart Prize was created to encourage."



The graphic features a blue background with a white, cloud-like pattern. On the left, the text reads: "Schweickart Prize" in large blue font, "2026 AWARDEE" in bold blue font, "BRIAN MURPHY UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH" and "RICHARD CANNON UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH" in blue font, "Untold Threats: A Worldwide Call to Defend New Frontiers" in black font, and "Schweickart Prize is a program of B612 Foundation" in small black font. On the right, three circular portraits are arranged vertically: the top one shows a man with glasses in a suit, the middle one shows a man in a suit, and the bottom one shows an older man in a dark jacket holding a trophy.

"As human activity and vital interests rapidly expand into regions beyond the protective shield of our atmosphere, the number of passing objects capable of causing serious damage to both life and critical infrastructure increases dramatically. Our Schweickart Prize winners this year have called for a comprehensive and systematic examination of this emerging reality," said Rusty Schweickart, Apollo 9 astronaut and co-founder

emeritus of B612 Foundation.

The winning proposal, [*Untold Threats: A Worldwide Call to Defend New Frontiers*](#), was developed by Brian P. Murphy and Richard E. Cannon of the University of Edinburgh. Their work highlights emerging threats posed by meteoroid storms, ejecta from asteroid deflection and mining operations, lunar impacts, and other hazards that could jeopardize the rapidly expanding ecosystem of satellites, communications systems, lunar infrastructure, and future space-based industries.

The proposal calls for establishing an International Commission on Space Infrastructure Resilience (ICSIR) to investigate these risks and develop recommendations for the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Ultimately, the authors envision creating a permanent international coordinating body, termed WARDEN (Warning-network for Asset Resilience from Dusts, Ejecta, and NEOs), to complement existing planetary defense organizations and coordinate the protection of humanity's assets beyond Earth.

“As civilization becomes increasingly dependent on infrastructure in Earth orbit and cislunar space, we believe planetary defense must evolve accordingly,” said Brian Murphy, who co-authored the proposal with Richard Cannon. “Our work seeks to ensure that humanity's future expansion into space remains safe, sustainable, and resilient. We are deeply honored to receive the Schweickart Prize and hope this proposal sparks broader international conversations about protecting these new frontiers.”

The winning proposal will be presented publicly today, June 23, via a live online event open to the press and the public, where the authors will share their work. Registration is available at schweickartprize.org.

Honorable Mentions: B612 also extends its recognition to the other proposals that demonstrated merit and innovative thinking in addressing critical aspects of planetary defense. This year's honorable mentions include:

[Like Streaks Passing in the Night: A Novel One-Tracklet Earth Impactor Detection Pipeline for LSST](#), Ian Chow (University of Washington)

[The Incremental Benefits of Eccentric Collisions in Asteroid Kinetic Deflection Missions](#), Kinthong Lee (Tsinghua University)

[Project Pathfinder](#), Finn McGeever, James Beiolley, Jack Campbell, Yogesh Andiyappan, Sergio Sanoja Hernandez, Pau Costa Aura (Cranfield University)

The official presentation of the physical museum-quality prize and the \$10,000 award will take place at a public ceremony at Lowell Observatory on June 27, coinciding with Asteroid Day Arizona activities. Rusty Schweickart, joined by fellow astronauts Nicole Stott, Dr. Ed Lu, Steve Smith, and Anousheh Ansari, science communicator Scott Manley, and Amanda Bosh, executive director of Lowell Observatory, will present the prize in person.

The public is invited to join the celebration and participate in Asteroid Day activities taking place throughout the weekend at Lowell Observatory and Meteor Crater.

The School of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Edinburgh will organize a celebration event later this year to recognize the award and the team.

Further details on the winning proposal can be found at SchweickartPrize.org. Event information for Asteroid Day Arizona is available at asteroiddayaz.com.

About the Schweickart Prize: The Schweickart Prize, a program of B612, is an annual award that fosters a new generation of leaders in planetary defense and encourages ideas to help protect Earth from potential asteroid impacts. The prize is named after Russell “Rusty” Schweickart, Apollo 9 astronaut, co-founder of the Association of Space Explorers, and co-founder of B612. The Prize is co-chaired by Randy Schweickart and Rusty B. Schweickart. For more information, visit [Schweickartprize.org](https://schweickartprize.org). The founding sponsors who have funded the Schweickart Prize program include [Anousheh Ansari](#), [Barringer Crater Company](#), [Future Ventures](#), [Geoffrey Notkin](#), [Jurvetson Family Foundation](#), [Meteor Crater Enterprises](#), [Randy Schweickart](#) and Michelle Heng, and [Rusty B. Schweickart](#) and [Joanne Keys](#).

About B612 Foundation: A United States-based nonprofit, founded in 2002, develops 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, as well as individual donors from 46 countries, support the work financially. For more information, visit [B612foundation.org](https://b612foundation.org) or follow on social: [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) or [Bluesky](#).

###

B612 Global Media Request: Submit via [Media Request Form](#).

Caroline Keir
Publicity and Communications Officer at The University of Edinburgh
caroline.keir@ed.ac.uk