

EMBARGOED UNTIL SEPTEMBER 15, 2009

15th ANNUAL HEINZ AWARDS

RECIPIENT BACKGROUNDER

Chip Giller, 38, Seattle, Washington

Chip Giller is being honored with a \$100,000 Heinz Award for founding the online, green media platform *Grist*, which delivers a broad range of environmental news and views free of charge to a young and growing audience of nearly one million readers.

Launched in 1999, *grist.org* instantly established a new model for environmental reporting, eschewing a gloom-and-doom approach in favor of a more positive, often irreverent style of reporting. Touted as a “beacon in the smog,” *Grist* covers everything from climate change to green cars to green building and green celebrity news, showing how the environment intersects with critical issues like poverty, health care and economic growth. While the site makes environmental topics fun and engaging, its writers and bloggers are known for their unsparing, critical looks at the issues.

Acutely aware of the declining readership of traditional news vehicles and their failure to connect with young audiences, Mr. Giller has proved adept at adapting quickly to new trends in readership and technology, disseminating *Grist's* journalism via RSS, Facebook, Twitter and other new-media channels. *Grist* adds thousands of new readers each month and can be credited with attracting a new generation of environmentalists by reaching readers in their 20s and 30s. *Newsweek* called it “*The Daily Show of the environment.*”

The non-profit *Grist* has 25 employees and its operating budget in 2008 was \$3 million. Its funding comes from a combination of reader contributions, advertising and institutional donors such as the Ford Foundation, the David and Lucille Packard Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation.

Mr. Giller, who graduated from Brown University with an honors degree in environmental studies, is a three-time fellow with the Institutes for Journalism and Natural Resources and a senior fellow with the Environmental Leadership Program. He has also been named a *TIME* magazine “Hero of the Environment.”

Said Teresa Heinz, chairman of the Heinz Family Foundation:

“With Grist, Chip Giller has created the green Gutenberg for this generation of environmental advocates. Readers can learn about the promise of innovation and new ideas, and when there is an important cause at stake, Grist asks readers to get involved. Mr. Giller has established a serious source of independent content and analysis that makes environmental issues relevant to a new and broad audience. It is an honor to present him with this award.”

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