

## Eric Rosenthal to Receive AAPD's 2008 Henry B. Betts Award

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The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) has bestowed the prestigious **2008 Henry B. Betts Award** to **Eric Rosenthal**, founder and Executive Director of Mental Disability Rights International (MDRI). AAPD announced that Rosenthal is being recognized for "pioneering the field of international human rights advocacy for people with disabilities and bringing unprecedented international awareness to their concerns...Through MDRI, Rosenthal has investigated human rights conditions in 23 countries and has trained and supported the work of disability activists around the world to fight these abuses." The recent adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is, according to AAPD, "in no small part due to Rosenthal's role promoting disability rights as a human right."



*Eric Rosenthal speaking at the University of Connecticut in 2007*

"Eric Rosenthal has helped to galvanize international attention to the human rights violations that people with significant disabilities are subjected to every day," says **AAPD President and CEO Andrew J. Imparato**. "His vision, passion, strategic advocacy, and belief in self-determination and human dignity are changing policies and changing lives in a disability movement that is increasingly connected across the globe."

"Eric Rosenthal's work has been revolutionary," says **Alison A. Hillman de Velasquez**, Director of the Americas Program at MDRI. "He has labored tirelessly for the recognition and enforcement of the rights of arguably the most marginalized and stigmatized population of persons with disabilities, persons with psychiatric and intellectual disabilities, and for the recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities as human rights."

The Betts Award is the "Nobel Prize" of the disability rights field, according to **Paul Steven Miller**, former Commissioner of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and current MDRI Board member, who nominated Eric Rosenthal for the award. The award is named in honor of Henry B. Betts, M.D., a pioneer in the field of rehabilitation medicine who started his career with the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago in 1964 and has devoted himself to improving the quality of life for people with disabilities. The award program was created in 1989 and the \$50,000 annual prize is funded by the Prince Charitable Trusts.

The 2008 Henry B. Betts Award will be presented collaboratively by AAPD and the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago at the 2008 AAPD Leadership Gala, an awards ceremony and dinner, on March 5, 2008, at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC. For additional information about this event, visit the AAPD website: [www.aapd.com](http://www.aapd.com), or call AAPD at 202-457-0046 (V/TTY).