

# Mayors present awards to distinguished residents on Helsinki Day

Every year since 1969, the City of Helsinki has presented awards to residents who have made significant contributions. This year's 12 June ceremony recognised over a dozen achievements in the fields of arts, science, sports and sustainable development. Annual research grants and youth scholarships were also distributed in an online ceremony.

"This year Helsinki Day is being celebrated under exceptional circumstances. We've had a rough spring, but it is now behind us and so we cautiously look to the summer ahead and commemorate the birthday of our beloved capital," said Mayor of Helsinki **Jan Vapaavuori** in his Helsinki Day address.

Helsinki Day awards for 2020 were transferred online this year due to the coronavirus pandemic. Deputy Mayors **Anni Sinnemäki**, **Pia Pakarinen**, **Nasima Razmyar** and **Sanna Vesikansa** joined Helsinki Mayor Vapaavuori in presenting the awards at a 'Helsinki says Thank You' ceremony, available for viewing on the city's [Helsinki-kanava](#) video service.

"Exceptional circumstances call for exceptional solutions. I'm very proud of how Helsinki's residents have responded to these difficult times. They have complied with restrictions and shown ingenuity and enthusiasm to face covid-19 challenges and help their fellow residents. Their love for their hometown and goodwill towards others has been apparent," Vapaavuori said.

"I couldn't imagine a better time to thank and reward the residents of our city than the present. We have decided to transfer the presentation of the traditional Golden Helsinki Awards to the autumn, to better consider the extraordinary work of numerous actors in our city during the coronavirus crisis. But today we will recognise star players in the field of the arts, science, sports and sustainable development, and encourage them to continue their pioneering work. Thank you for helping make Helsinki the best city in the world," the mayor continued.

## Helsinki Culture Award (15 000 euros)

This award is presented each year to a Helsinki-based artist who has made a major contribution to the field they work in and Helsinki's cultural life. The 2020 recipient is musician and songwriter **J. Karjalainen**.

## Helsinki Artists of the Year (5 000 euros each)

This award is presented to Helsinki artists that represent different fields of arts and culture. In 2020, three key players in the theatre arts have been recognised for ground-breaking work that seldom receives the attention and praise it deserves.

- **Jaana Taskinen**, theatre director, pedagogue
- **Jussi Lehtonen**, actor, theatre director and postdoc researcher
- **Kirsi Manninen**, costume designer, scenographer

## Helsinki Science Award (10 000 euros)

The Helsinki Science Award is designed to strengthen and promote the city of Helsinki as an active sponsor of scientific research and activity. The award is presented each year to a Helsinki resident or Helsinki-based group that has made a significant contribution to their field. The 2020 recipient is **Satu Mustjoki**, a Helsinki University professor of translational haematology, Helsinki University Hospital HUS Cancer Centre chief physician, and director of the iCAN Digital Precision Cancer Medicine Flagship initiative's immunological unit.

In addition, research grants from the City of Helsinki were distributed to 11 Helsinki-themed research projects. A total of 73,000 euros in research grants was awarded.

## Helsinki Sports Awards

The City of Helsinki's awards to individuals and groups in the field of sports are determined by their athletic success. Sports clubs are awarded for their excellent work with children and youth and their development of innovative operating models and practices.

### Helsinki Athlete or Team of the Year (10 000 euros)

**Toni Piispanen**, Paralympic athlete/wheelchair sprint

### Helsinki Sports Club of the Year (5 000 euros)

**Helsinki Tarmo**, martial arts

### Helsinki Youth Athlete of the Year (2 500 euros)

**Emil Ruusuvuori**, tennis

### Helsinki Coach of the Year (2 500 euros)

**Markku Kanerva**, manager of the national men's football team

## Helsinki Environment Award

The City of Helsinki presented its first Helsinki Environment Award in 2008, and each year a different ecological theme is featured. The 2020 theme focused on the improved energy efficiency of housing companies in the last decade, an issue that links closely to the Energy Renaissance Programme that is part of Helsinki's push to become carbon neutral by the year 2035.

The 2020 award was presented to the housing company of **As. Oy Mannerheimintie 106**, which represents a Helsinki housing unit built in 1939. The housing company switched to geothermal heating in December 2018 along with a partial transition to ground source cooling. The housing company **Bostads Ab Lönegrop** received an honourable mention, as it also switched its 1956 building to geothermal heating recently and replaced its windows and façade insulation to improve energy efficiency.

A list of this year's selection criteria and research grant recipients is available [at link \(in Finnish\)](#).

The 'Helsinki says Thank You' ceremony is available for viewing on the [Helsinki-kanava](#) website.

To see the complete Helsinki Day programme, go to [www.helsinkipaiva.fi](http://www.helsinkipaiva.fi).

## Further information:

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*The Helsinki Day celebration on 12 June is coordinated by the Helsinki Events Foundation. The foundation is responsible for organising several other public events in Helsinki, such as the Helsinki Festival, Lux Helsinki and New Year's celebrations, as well as the Helsinki Baltic Herring Market and Helsinki Christmas Market.*