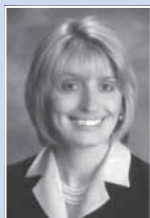


# F O C U S for the community

A Publication for the Residents of Utica Community Schools

**From the Superintendent...**



by Christine M. Johns, Ed.D.

**State budget has significant impact on UCS students**

We are at an important time of transition in Utica Community Schools.

On one side, we must continue our improvement strategies that are producing student achievement levels that rank among the highest in the county, state and nation.

Our students are embracing more rigorous opportunities and increasing numbers are choosing greater challenges to better prepare for post-secondary education.

For example, the Class of 2011 will be the first to graduate having successfully completed a more challenging series of state graduation requirements.

These new requirements will ensure our graduates have mastered higher-level courses in English, science, world languages and mathematics – including Algebra II – and are well-rounded in technology, social studies and the arts.

Additionally, the number of students taking Advanced

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**It all starts here!**

**Kindergarten Open Houses on Wed. March 23 7 p.m. at all UCS elementary schools**

Parents: If your child will enter kindergarten this fall, now is the time to register. Children who reach their fifth birthday on or before December 1, 2011 are eligible for kindergarten.

Please plan to attend Kindergarten Open House on Wednesday, March 23 at 7 p.m. at your child's elementary school. Not sure where your child will attend? Call 586.797.1120.

To streamline your child's enrollment, access the registration forms on the [www.uticak12.org](http://www.uticak12.org) home page under "It All Starts Here!"

Bring your completed forms to Open House, where you will also have the opportunity to learn about UCS kindergarten programs and meet the principal and teachers. *continued on page 2*



Morgan Future Doctor



Owen Future Biochemist



Rylie Future President



Raffaell Future Wimbledon Star

**Dresden students practice 4H skills**



Teacher Lauri Immonen (top right) and students give their "quinzee" snow shelter a thumbs-up!

Sixth graders at Dresden Elementary learned how to build snow shelters – known as quinzees – along with practicing other 4-H winter survival skills during a day-long outdoor learning activity on school grounds. Teachers Danielle DiFalco, Lauri Immonen, Abby Leonard, Stephanie Preston and student teacher Steven Bray joined fellow teacher Theresa Whitenight and her husband Joseph Whitenight to instruct the students in skills such as fire starting, snowshoeing, orienteering and building the snow shelters. Students completed specific tasks independently and in teams as they rotated through each activity.

The school's second annual sixth grade outdoor day enhanced the students' study of "Brian's Winter," by Gary Paulson. After reading the book, they reenacted some experiences the title character endured to survive a winter alone in the Canadian wilderness. Afterward, they wrote about what they learned.

Mr. and Mrs. Whitenight are 4-H leaders who conduct Dresden's 4-H Outdoor Adventure Challenge Club, an after-school program that focuses on encouraging children to be active outdoors while building positive character traits and learning teamwork and cooperation. The Challenge Club has more than 80 fifth and sixth grade members, as well as some returning Dresden students now in junior high and high school. Club members recently experienced ice fishing on Lake St. Clair, and in warmer weather enjoyed hiking, canoeing, skiing, rock climbing and caving trips in Michigan, Indiana and Kentucky.

**Federal construction grant to save UCS taxpayers more than \$10 million over 15 years**

A federal grant estimated to save UCS taxpayers more than \$10 million in bond costs over the next 15 years has cleared the way for a series of voter-approved renovations and construction. The federal funds were made available through the recent stimulus act to promote school construction programs.

As a result, the UCS Board of Education unanimously authorized the sale of \$14.25 million in bonds, which took place in February during a favorable market. It is the second series sold as part of the \$112.5 million bond issue voters approved in 2009. Thanks to the district's successful federal grant application, the bonds

were sold with virtually no interest costs to UCS taxpayers.

"This is great news for our community," said Superintendent Dr. Christine M. Johns. "The grant protects our taxpayers during these economic times and allows us to move forward with

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## Points of Pride

**MICHIGAN MATH PRIZE**  
Fifty-six UCS students who attend the Utica Center for Mathematics, Science, and Technology (UCMST), qualified for the final round of the Michigan Mathematics Prize Competition.

**MARKETING EDUCATOR AWARD**  
The Michigan Marketing Educators Association (MME) selected Dana Boice, marketing teacher at Utica High School, to receive this year's Dr. Louis R. Graziano Outstanding Marketing Educator Award. MME recognizes educators who not only manage an outstanding marketing education program in their high schools, but who also make significant contributions that improve and promote marketing education in the community and through professional activities.

**MDE SCHOOL BREAKFAST CHALLENGE AWARD**  
Utica Community Schools has been honored by the Michigan Department of Education for meeting the School Breakfast Challenge. Research shows that students who eat breakfast can have improved achievement.

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## It all starts in kindergarten *continued from page 1*

In addition, the following documents are required:

- Your child's original birth certificate or certified copy, with raised seal, issued by the clerk of the county of where your child was born or the health department of the state of birth;
- Your child's immunization record, including vision and hearing screening;
- Two proofs of residency:
  - 1) Photo I.D
  - 2) Property tax bill, closing papers or lease agreement. Utility bills are not accepted.

UCS offers parents several kindergarten options – some have limited enrollment:

- Traditional half-day kindergarten program at all elementary schools

- KinderPlus full-day kindergarten at Beck, Burr, Collins, DeKeyser, Dresden, Harvey, Havel, Morgan, Oakbrook, Plumbrook, Schuchard, West Utica and Wiley Elementary schools
- Montessori preschool/ kindergarten at two sites
- Full-day Mandarin Chinese program at Oakbrook Elementary
- KinderDay Care, a traditional half-day A.M. program and a tuition-based P.M. child care program at schools where space is available. Call 586.797.1050 for details.

Applications for KinderPlus or Mandarin Chinese should be submitted with your registration forms. Please contact the Early Childhood Office, 586.797.4660 for Montessori information.

Utica Community Schools offers limited Schools of Choice enrollment to Macomb County residents.

**UCS Schools of Choice Open House, April 18**

Call 586.797.1122 or go to [www.uticak12.org](http://www.uticak12.org) and click on the blue Schools of Choice button at the upper left. UCS will host a Schools of Choice Open House on Monday, April 18 at 7 p.m. at Heritage Junior High School, 37400 Dodge Park (just north of 16 Mile Road) in Sterling Heights. For more about our Schools of Choice Open House, contact [tim.mcavoy@uticak12.org](mailto:tim.mcavoy@uticak12.org).

## Students learn to STAMP out bullying

National speaker Jay Banks, Ph.D. mixed fun with a message as he taught Plumbrook students they have the power to curb bullying with an easy to remember acronym - STAMP. Banks has studied school bullying and shares tips based on proven research. The key, he said, is to make sure students have the information to avoid and stop bullies.



“The best way to reduce bullying is to empower the victim and the bystanders,” he said. Here is the five-point strategy he shared with the students: **S – Stay away from bullies.** “Seventy-five percent of the bullying will disappear if students recognized who they play well with,” he said.

**T – Tell someone.** Banks told Plumbrook students they can trust the teachers and adults in their lives to help them stop bullies. “Every adult in this world has been bullied. They know how it feels because it has happened to them.”

**A – Avoid bad situations.** Banks told students, “When you can see an adult, you are safe. That’s a good situation.”

**M – Make friends.** “You know you will always be in a safe situation if you make friends,” he said.

**P – Project confidence.** “The child that has a positive demeanor is three times less likely to be chosen by a bully,” Banks said.

## From the Superintendent... *continued from page 1*

*Placement (AP) exams has doubled over the past six years. In fact, UCS has the highest number of students in Michigan taking these college-level exams.*

*UCS parents have more educational choices than ever to meet their child's needs, whether in support services that reinforce necessary skills or new programs created to reflect this generation's global future.*

*But on the transition's other side, even as we implement many positive changes, we face continued budget challenges resulting from Michigan's school funding crisis.*

*Recently, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder proposed his state budget for the 2011-12 fiscal year. If adopted, the budget would negatively impact school districts two major ways:*

- a sizeable reduction in our per-pupil foundation allowance and
- a significant increase in the rate districts pay into the mandatory state retirement system.

*In terms of our foundation allowance, the governor proposes a decrease of \$470 per-pupil. This reduction in the allowance, which is the primary source of funding for all public schools, would shrink the foundation to below 2005-06 levels.*

*Additionally, the governor's budget includes a dramatic increase in the mandated retirement rate to 24.4 percent of our payroll. This rate is established by the State of Michigan and is not controlled by Utica Community Schools.*

*Combined with the expected increased costs associated with running a school district, the net impact on UCS is an operating deficit of \$36.7 million for the 2011-2012 school year – or the equivalent of \$1,258 less per-pupil.*

*The governor's proposal comes after eight continuous years of reductions enacted by Utica Community Schools to address state funding shortfalls. Since 2002, UCS reduced its spending by more than \$65 million.*

*These reductions include eliminating 561 staff positions, employee concessions and contributions to health care, strategic use of our fund equity, revenue enhancements, school closures and restructuring programs and services.*

*Despite our proactive measures, the severity of the proposed reductions makes it clear that more change will be necessary to protect the future of our school district.*

*Over the next few months, we will continue the process of preparing a balanced budget for the 2011-12 school year in accordance with Michigan law. This process will include communicating with you, working with our state lawmakers and making the changes necessary to address our fiscal realities.*

*I want to stress that this is a process. During this time, the legislature and governor will be considering several options that will impact education and school funding. It is important for our community to be aware of these proposals and their continued impact on our schools. To facilitate this, we post regular updates about our budget position on the UCS Web site: [www.uticak12.org](http://www.uticak12.org).*

*Utica Community Schools has a long history of strong fiscal management and overcoming challenges by focusing on student achievement. We are a community that cares deeply for its children. Despite obstacles, UCS will continue moving forward to provide our students the best education possible with the resources available to us. As always, we will continue to focus on academic achievement.*

## Points of Pride

continued from page 2

### ALL STATE SWIMMER

At the MHSAA Division I Girls Swimming and Diving Championship Finals, Eisenhower High School's Kei Cze Prentis finished fifth in the 200 IM and 100 yard backstroke events, breaking her own school records and earning All State honors in both. She is the first Eisenhower swimmer to be named All State in two events. She is also a five-time Macomb Area Conference individual champion and was named the Macomb County Senior Swimmer of the Year.

Kei Cze's accomplishments also extend to the classroom. She maintains an exceptionally high GPA and is a member of the National Honor Society, National Spanish Honor Society and is a Spanish Club officer. She plans to swim competitively in college while pursuing a degree in medicine.

### NATIONAL MERIT FINALISTS

Eight UCS seniors have been named National Merit Scholarship finalists: Ryan Boe, Mark Cinquegrani, Megan Cole, Alexander Coulter, Maxwell Geisendorfer, Sam Gracik, Cameron Herringshaw and Joshua King. Finalists now compete for three levels of scholarships offered through the program: corporate, college and merit scholarships.

More than 1.5 million students of the Class of 2011 entered the National Merit Program by taking the 2009 Preliminary SAT/ National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. In September, the highest scorers were named semifinalists on a regional basis.

To be selected as a finalist, semifinalists fulfilled requirements to enter the next round of competition, which included having a record of consistently high academic performance, being

continued

## Governor Snyder, "Build it Bigger" host slated to speak to 2,000 UCS sixth graders at Career Focus Luncheon

The 18th annual Career Focus Luncheon, a "must attend" event for workplace professionals and 2,000 Utica Community Schools sixth graders, is set for Wednesday and Thursday, May 4 - 5, at the Sterling Inn Banquet and Conference Center, 34911 Van Dyke at 15 Mile Road in Sterling Heights.

Michigan Governor Rick Snyder will be the keynote speaker at the Thursday event. Television host Danny Forster will keynote the Wednesday luncheon.

Mr. Forster is the host of the popular show, "Build It Bigger," on the Science and Discovery channels. He also lectures nationally and internationally on architecture, education and sustainability.

Mr. Snyder is the 48th governor of the State of Michigan. Prior to his election last November, Governor Snyder was a successful business owner and CEO.

The Career Focus Luncheon, sponsored by the UCS Foundation for Educational Excellence in partnership with the Sterling Heights Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Advisor & Source Newspapers, and in cooperation with Utica Community Schools, has impacted the lives of more than 30,000 students since its inception.

Business and individual sponsors are needed to make this year's Career Focus Luncheon another success. Please call the Foundation at



**Governor Rick Snyder**



**Danny Forster, host of "Build It Bigger"**

586.797.6953 to reserve your table on May 4 or May 5 and share your career know-how with today's children – tomorrow's leaders.

## Help college dreams come true at the third annual Arts & Idols Gala



The third Annual Arts & Idols Scholarship Gala will be held Thursday, May 12 at the Palazzo Grande Banquet Center on Van Dyke, south of 25 Mile.

The "idols" portion of the evening will showcase amateur singing talents in a prize competition judged by local celebrities. The "arts" portion will feature works by UCS student artists. Proceeds from the event fund the Superintendent's Scholarship program. Last year, \$19,000 was raised and eight deserving UCS graduates were awarded college scholarships from the Gala proceeds of the year before.

Arts & Idols is sponsored by the UCS Foundation for Educational Excellence and the Palazzo Grande. The event includes dinner, entertainment, a scholarship raffle and auctions of student art work on display. Tickets are \$65 and are available at [www.ucsfoundation.org](http://www.ucsfoundation.org) or by calling the Foundation at 586.797.6953.

## Learn more about planning for your academic future at the UCS College Fair

Utica Community Schools will hold its fourth annual College Fair from 6:30 – 8 p.m. on Tuesday, April 26 at Henry Ford II High School.

The event is free and a great chance for UCS students and parents to speak to representatives from several colleges and universities all in one place. Find out about programs of study, admission requirements, financial aid and more.

The College Fair, along with the Academic Blitz held in February and the Career Expo in March, are part of the district's Reaching Higher initiative, designed to prepare all students for a successful post-secondary experience.



## Points of Pride

continued

endorsed and recommended by an official of their high school, earning SAT scores that confirm their PSAT/NMSQT performance and writing an essay.

### AWARD WINNING MUSICIANS

Thirty-four UCS student musicians were selected to perform in the 2010-11 Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association's District XVI Junior High Honors Band: Eppler JHS –

Ashley Kerr, Joshua Forkin, Chris Merrill, Ronald Pinto, Ryan Herc, Zachary Grohman, Davis JHS – Becky Sekich, Alex Doroslovac, Patrick Murphy Malow JHS – Colleen Durand, Katie Galayda, Kelsey Simasko, Jordan Barker Bemis JHS –

Hannah Hong, Pam Gudobba, Danielle Maxwell, Folasade Adegbenro, Amanda Boschman, Sarah Brisky Heritage JHS –

Christian Miller, Katelyn Schram, Katie Stieber, John Akroush, Dylan Gaines, Jacob Weihs

Jeannette JHS – Robert Kadrach, Danielle Marwede

Shelby JHS – Gabe Moore, Conner Campbell, Benjamin LePage, Kellie Hurst, Emma DeBeaussaert, Brittney Hall, Kendra Sachs MSBOA District XVI is comprised of students from Oakland, Macomb and St. Clair counties.

### STUDENT OLYMPIANS

UCS Special Olympians captured nearly 50 medals and awards at this year's winter Olympics held in Traverse City. The student-athletes competed in downhill skiing, cross country skiing and snowboarding earning 16 gold medals, 13 silver, 12 bronze, four 4th place ribbons and one 5th place ribbon.

# 4 FOCUS

## Board of Education Election on May 3

Five candidates seek to fill three positions on the May 3, 2011 Board of Education election ballot. The terms of office are for six years each, beginning July 1, 2011 and ending June 30, 2017.

Residents should direct all voting or election inquiries to the Macomb County Clerk's Office or their local municipal office. The following information was provided by the candidates:

Steven Grady has lived in the district for 19 years and resides in Sterling Heights. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in management and is employed as an engineer in facilities, operations and management at Wayne State University. He is married to Barbara Grady. His son Steven, 24, graduated from Stevenson High School. Mr. Grady is a 36-year member of Local 324 of

the Operating Engineers. He donates time and resources to many civic organizations located in midtown Detroit.

Gene L. Klida resides in Shelby Township and has lived in the district for 20 years. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Michigan State University and is a community volunteer. She is married to Dr. David J. Klida. They have two sons: Michael, a 2001 Eisenhower High School graduate and current Boston University Ph.D. candidate, and Patrick, a 2006 Eisenhower graduate who attends Wayne State University Law School. Mrs. Klida has served for 13 years on the Board of Education and was first elected in 1998. She is the current Board vice president and has also served as Board secretary. She is the chairperson of the Board of Education's Curriculum

Subcommittee and is a member of the Board's Human Resources Subcommittee. Mrs. Klida is a trustee on the Utica Community Schools Foundation for Educational Excellence and a member of the Utica Community Action Team (UCAT).

Ken Krolczyk has lived in the district for 11 years and is a Washington Township resident. He has a Bachelor of Science degree from Central Michigan University. He is employed by Triune Benefits Group as a branch sales manager. He and his wife, Virginia Krolczyk, have three children: Brennan, 12, Alena, 10 and Viveca, 6, all of whom attend Messmore Elementary School. He is affiliated with Metropolitan Club Spirit #22 of Royal Oak, serving police, firefighters and postal workers.

Michele Templeton has resided in the district for 28 years and lives in Sterling Heights. She is a 1977 graduate of Stevenson High School and is employed as church choir director at St. Mark Orthodox Church in Rochester Hills. She is married to Dr. Douglas Templeton. Their daughter Melanie, 17, is a senior at Stevenson High School. Mrs. Templeton has served for six years on the Board of Education since being elected in 2005. She is currently serving her fourth year as Board secretary and has served on the Board's Curriculum Subcommittee and Human Resources Subcommittee since 2005.

Carl Territo has lived in the district for 35 years and resides in Shelby Township. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Arts with a major in Mass Communica-

tions from from Wayne State University. He is employed by Reckitt Benckiser Pharmaceuticals as a clinical liaison. He is married to Kathleen Territo. Their four children: Carl Jr., Amy, Whitney and Craig, all graduated from Henry Ford II High School. They also have two grandchildren enrolled in UCS. Mr. Territo served on the Board of Education from 1985-91 and from 1997 to the present.

Currently, he is the Board treasurer and chairman of the Board's Capital Projects Subcommittee. He has also chaired the Finance Subcommittee. Mr. Territo serves as vice-chairman of the Macomb County School Boards Association and is a member of the Michigan Association of School Boards. He is also affiliated with the Sterling Civic Theater.

## Construction grant savings *continued from page 1*

improvements that will ensure our students learn in 21st Century facilities."

Voters initially approved the \$112.5 million bond issue almost two years ago to fund school renovations, address equity issues between facilities and improve safety, technology and infrastructure across the district.

District officials have since been managing sale of the bonds to offset its impact on local millage rates as a result of decreasing property values. UCS has issued just \$22.5 million of the bonds in anticipation of an economic recovery.

"We have been carefully managing the sale of the bonds to ensure we meet our fiscal responsibility to UCS taxpayers," Dr. Johns said.

"These federal funds will ensure we continue to protect the investment our residents have made in their schools in a way that addresses the current economic climate and its impact on property owners."

Projects funded by the \$14.25 million bond sale involve significant improvements to Utica High School, including a new media center, renovated classroom space,

mechanical and heating improvements, relocation of offices and enhancements to building security.

Additionally, plans for other technology and construction projects across the district are being finalized.

Under state law, bond funds can only be used for construction-related projects and cannot offset operating costs.

## UCS District Calendar

**APRIL 4 – 8, 2011**  
No school – Spring break  
**APRIL 22, 2011**  
No school  
**MAY 27, 2011**  
No school – staff professional development  
**MAY 30, 2011**  
No school – Memorial Day

**JUNE 14, 2011**  
Secondary half day – secondary exams  
**JUNE 15, 2011**  
Secondary half day – secondary exams  
**JUNE 16, 2011**  
Last day for students – half day for all – secondary exams

### Notice of Nondiscrimination

In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act and the Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act, it is the policy of Utica Community Schools that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, age, disability, height, weight, or marital status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination during any instructional opportunities, programs, services, job placement assistance, employment or in policies governing student conduct and attendance. Any person suspecting a discriminatory practice should contact the Executive Director of Human Resources at Utica Community Schools, 11303 Greendale, Sterling Heights, MI 48312 or call (586) 797-1000.



586.797.1000

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
Carol Klenow, Ed.D., *President*  
Gene L. Klida, *Vice President*  
Carl Territo, *Treasurer*  
Michele Templeton, *Secretary*  
Robert A. Ross, Ph.D., *Trustee*  
Jennifer L. Prybys, *Trustee*  
Daniel J. Meyers, *Trustee*  
  
Christine M. Johns, Ed.D.  
*Superintendent*

**FOCUS for the Community**  
*Editors:* Tim McAvoy  
Fran Schokora

**MSPRA Distinguished Award**  
*Michigan School Public Relations Association*

**NSPRA Award of Excellence**  
*National School Public Relations Association*

Daily updates about Utica Community Schools are available on:



Access all sites via [www.uticak12.org](http://www.uticak12.org)