Recently, three Utica Community Schools groups were recognized by global organizations for the quality of their work.

The Eisenhower Dance Team, FIRST robotics teams and the Utica Center for Science and Industry were featured on a world stage this year.

**Eisenhower Dance Team**

The Eisenhower High School dance team recently represented the United States at an international championship – an honor previously awarded only to college teams. The 18-member team was selected by USA Cheer to compete at the International Cheer Union (ICU) World Championships.

The honor was based on the strength of performance of the team at the national high school cheerleading and dance championships in February, where Eisenhower claimed first place.

The team took a silver medal at the international level in Jazz and bronze in Hip Hop.

**FIRST Robotics**

Closer to home, the World Tournament of the FIRST Robotics was held in Detroit this year and Utica Community Schools continued to be well represented.

The ThunderChickens robotics team competed after winning two state competitions, including a clean sweep of every round at the Marysville Regional Tournament.

Also participating was the Raging Robots team comprised of Shelby and Bemis junior high students.

Members of the Crevolution team also attended the World Tournament to participate in activities that promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education.

The ThunderChickens have a long record of success in this international competition, earning multiple district, state and world division titles and twice being named World Champions. The success reflects the district’s status as a hotbed for automation and robotics.

A love for learning crosses generations

There may be decades that separate Harvey Elementary students and their special senior citizen friends who tutor them, but they have one thing in common – the love of learning.

The Harvey tutoring program is one example of a growing number of intergenerational programs in UCS. The projects bring generations together through activities such as students visiting senior centers, in-class tutoring, and working together on service projects.

The seniors share their knowledge, talents and perspective on life with students. The students share their natural curiosity with the seniors and learn the value of community service.

“I love spending time at the school,” said “Grandma” JoAnne Phillips, a super volunteer at Beck Elementary. “I see how hard everyone works. If we can continue to support our schools and that success continues to grow, we are going to have a great future in this community.”

For many students, what begins as class projects ends up as friendships. Utica High student Thomas Marnon started volunteering at the Shelby Senior Center to earn hours of service for National Honor Society. He is now a regular fixture at the dances, and has brought his high school friends with him to the dances.

It makes me feel good to know that I’m making people happy while being able to have fun at the same time,” Marnon said.
Outstanding Teachers of the Year Honored

Three Utica Community Schools educators were recently honored as the district’s 2018 Outstanding Teachers of the Year.

Michelle Brasza of West Utica Elementary School, Jeffery Groth of Malow Junior High School and Justin Spear of the Utica Academy for International Studies were selected as representatives of the dedication and commitment UCS educators bring to their schools every day.

Brasza, the elementary teacher of the year, creates a strong foundation and love of learning for West Utica Elementary kindergarten students.

“She makes life-long lasting relationships with parents and her students,” said West Utica parent Meagan Ferrick.

Groth, the junior high school and overall UCS teacher of the year, is an award-winning teacher who creates opportunities for his students to perform on stages throughout the region and state.

“He is not just a teacher to us, he is also a family member,” said ninth grader Molly Klein. “He really understands all of us and treats us with a high level of respect.”

As teacher of the year, Groth was also surprised with a free multi-year lease of a car from Suburban Ford of Sterling Heights.

Spear, the high school teacher of the year, teaches English at the Utica Academy for International Studies and serves as its Creativity, Action and Service coordinator.

Spear is recognized for the amount of time he invests in students to create strong writers and promote civic leadership skills.

“He will come down to the student’s level and take time out of his own schedule,” said ninth grader Issac Abraham. “He will always be the first one to ask you if you need help.”

The teachers were honored at a special celebration in the spring with community leaders and family members.

Graduation rate at 93 percent

Utica Community Schools students continue to be among the top performers through recently-released graduation rates. The Center for Educational Performance and Information annual report of Michigan graduation rates showed a UCS graduation rate of 93 percent.

UCS graduates outpaced the State of Michigan average of 80 percent by 13 percentage points. Regionally, UCS graduation rates outpace averages in Macomb, Oakland, Wayne and Livingston counties.

Together We Make a Difference

The Utica Community Schools Foundation for Educational Excellence, a non-profit organization, continues to support fine and performing arts programs, Superintendent’s Scholarships, as well as funding teacher grants, benefitting both students and teachers throughout the entire district.

Evening of Excellence: A Benefit for Scholarship

The Foundation is pleased to have provided over $260,000 in post-secondary tuition awards for deserving UCS seniors during the past 10 years.

The recipients embody the meaning of UCS Success by excelling in academics, displaying leadership, serving the community and overcoming personal challenges.

This spring, 33 Superintendent’s Scholarships and 14 community-based scholarships were awarded during the annual celebration.

Career Focus

Celebrating 25 years, the Foundation’s annual Career Focus luncheon offers more than 2,000 UCS sixth graders the opportunity to meet and share their digital resume with business representatives while hearing about their career experiences.

This year’s keynote speaker was Tricia Morrow, a General Motors Global Vehicle Safety Engineer. She told the students to be persistent as they begin working towards their dream careers. “Sometimes you have obstacles – I call them mountains,” she said. “Sometimes you will have to move mountains.”

Continued on page 4
Graduates lead the way in annual Macomb County All Academic celebration

Utica Community Schools 2018 graduates led the pack of Macomb County’s top high school seniors in the annual All Academic celebration.

Utica Community Schools graduates represented more than half of the students honored as both top overall scholars and through the Class A division of county school districts in the annual program.

The All Academic program is open to high school graduates from every public and private high school in the county and is a feature of the Macomb Daily. The county’s top students were selected by a committee based on their grade point average and SAT or ACT scores.

Highlights of this year’s program include:

- UCS graduates represent 32 of the 59 Class A top graduates
- 13 of the 20 members of Macomb County’s All Academic Dream Team are UCS graduates

UCS honored as one of the nation’s top communities for music education

Utica Community Schools has been named one of the Best Communities for Music Education in the nation.

UCS has been honored for its overall support and commitment to music education by the California-based National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM). The NAMM Foundation’s stamp of approval acknowledges and celebrates 583 school districts across the United States.

The Best Communities for Music Education designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students.

To qualify for the Best Communities designation, Utica Community Schools answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program, and community music-making programs. Responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

This is the fourth time the UCS community has earned this award.

The NAMM Foundation is a nonprofit supported in part by the National Association of Music Merchants and its approximately 10,300 members around the world. The foundation advances active participation in music making across the lifespan by supporting scientific research, philanthropic giving and public service programs.

Points of Pride

Eisenhower Paraprofessional honored for Making A Difference

Utica Community Schools is proud to recognize Mrs. Val Thomas, Eisenhower Paraprofessional, as the Utica Community Schools recipient of this year’s Make a Difference Award. Mrs. Thomas serves as a paraprofessional for Anna Forest, a senior student at Eisenhower High School.

Each year, the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) of the Macomb Intermediate School District, offers parents the opportunity to nominate a member of the school staff who has made a significant impact on their student’s educational experience.

Utica High newspaper enters the Hall of Fame

The Utica High School student newspaper has been inducted into the Michigan Interscholastic Press Association’s Hall of Fame for reaching the highest level of publication excellence over nearly ten years.

The Arrow student newspaper has now joined the school’s yearbook in the MIPA Hall of Fame.

Newspapers are eligible for MIPA’s Hall of Fame if they have nine years of earning the group’s highest rating – the Spartan Award – within a ten-year period. Spartan Awards are granted by MIPA judges on every aspect of the publication, including layout, writing and editing.

Henry Ford II Senior builds bright future as an architect with art college scholarship

Torrel Sparks’ dream of becoming an architect has proven to be built on a solid foundation. Sparks, a senior at Henry Ford II High School, has accepted a $72,000 scholarship to attend Milwaukee College.

The scholarship, he said, has been made possible through his experiences in Utica Community Schools, particularly his art and architecture design courses.

Stevenson grad honored by the military for cyber work

A 2014 Utica Community Schools alum has received the Blue Jacket of the Year Award at U.S. Cyber Warfare Command. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Anthony C. White, a Stevenson High School graduate, is in his third year of service.

He is a cryptologic technician serving at the Navy Cyber Warfare Development Group (NCWDG) located in Suitland, Maryland.

As a cryptologic technician, White operates state-of-the-art computer systems to conduct Information Operations. White collects and analyzes signals of interest to control access to material and information systems.

State grant supports innovative program preparing students for high-paying careers in engineering, automation and design

Utica Community Schools has received a $400,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Education to support the Stevenson Manufacturing, Automation, Design and Engineering (MADE) program.

Stevenson MADE is a four-year program, beginning this fall, that blends rigorous academic content with practical experiences in fabrication, automation and design engineering. In addition to specialized courses, advanced manufacturing principles will be integrated into all core academic courses of English, social studies, math and science.

Epple student to perform at Carnegie Hall

A Utica Community Schools junior high school student will be performing at Carnegie Hall this June as part of a national honors series. Epple Junior High School eighth grader Andy Lasceski has been selected to perform as a trumpeter in the 2018 Middle School Honors Performance Series at Carnegie Hall.

Lasceski earned entry into the series based on a review of an application and audition tape by a national Honors Selection Board.
Community partnerships promote a safe learning environment for students and staff

Through the work of community partnerships, Utica Community Schools continues to focus on a safe learning environment for all students.

The district and its municipal and county partners recently announced a series of initiatives that build on existing safety protocols that are in place for area schools.

UCS, the City of Sterling Heights and Shelby Township recently announced the establishment of School Resource Officers resource officers at the district’s comprehensive high schools – Eisenhower, Henry Ford II, Stevenson and Utica high schools.

“The School Resource Officer program builds on the strong relationship we have with local law enforcement to ensure a safe and secure learning environment for our students and staff,” Superintendent Dr. Christine Johns said. “The officers will work collaboratively with building principals on proactive measures that create a positive relationship with our school communities through the continued focus on student safety.”

The officers will support district staff on topics such as the role of police in a community, traffic laws, crime prevention, programs aimed at substance abuse prevention and community youth programs.

“We have high expectations for these new positions; we see School Resource Officers providing numerous benefits to both students and staff,” said Shelby Township Deputy Chief Mark Coil. “It is our belief that placing a SRO in our high schools serves many functions, none more important than being a positive role model for students.”

Sterling Heights Police Chief Dale Dwojakowski reinforced the importance of creating a positive relationship with students.

“Having more police officers present in schools will give us an opportunity not only to grow relationships with students but serve as a friend and resource,” he said.

In addition to police liaison officers, UCS recently announced it was one of the first Macomb County districts to partner with its emergency services department through its COMTEC Center. The partnership will result in law enforcement officials having access to school cameras in the event of emergency situations.

Community at the Heart
Continued from front page

ties for learning. Our teachers and staff members are involved members of this community who advocate for the success of each student.

Utica Community Schools is a “community” in the best sense of the word, I hope this newsletter fills you with a great deal of pride when you see the amazing work that is being done in your schools.

No matter what your role in our partnership, you are a key part of the long legacy of UCS Success that represents our district’s past, present and future.

World Stage
Continued from front page

The Tour

A film by UCS students was recently used to promote a message of empathy to an international audience.

The Tour, created by Utica Center for Science and Industry (UCSI) students, was one of five international student films shown by the United Nations at the Global Festival of Action in Bonn, Germany.

The Tour was featured by the United Nations in a showcase of virtual reality films that profiled specific challenges being faced by individuals across the globe. The “Virtual Reality Zone” showcase used the power of immersive storytelling to inspire viewers towards increased empathy, action and positive social change.

Making a Difference
Continued from page 2

Teacher Grants

Every year the Foundation distributes grant applications to all current UCS K-12 teachers.

This year, applications from eleven elementary teachers and two high school teachers were selected to receive a grant.

UCS Foundation for Educational Excellence is a registered 501(c)(3) organization governed by a Board of Trustees comprised of area business and community leaders.

U.S.D. Calendar 2018-2019

September
4 First Day of School
October
11 Secondary Conferences
Secondary Half Day
October
31 Elementary Records Day
Elementary Half Day
November
6 Election Day
No School
November
15 Elementary Conferences
Elementary Half Day
November
21 Thanksgiving Break Begins
No School
November
26 School Resumes
December
24 Winter Break Begins
No School
January
2 School Resumes
January
21 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
No School
January
23 Secondary Exams
Secondary Half Day
January
24 Secondary Exams
All Students Half Day
January
25 Secondary Exams
All Students Half Day
February
18 Mid-Winter Break Begins
No School
February
25 School Resumes
April
1 Spring Break Begins
No School
April
8 Spring Break Begins
No School
April
12 Elementary Records Day
Elementary Half Day
April
19 Good Friday
No School
May
27 Memorial Day
No School
June
12 Secondary Exams
Secondary Half Day
June
13 Secondary Exams
All Students Half Day
June
14 Last Day of School
Secondary Exams
June
27 Last Day of School
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 Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources at Utica Community Schools, 11303 Greendale, Sterling Heights, MI 48312 or call (586) 797-1000.

FOCUS for the Community
Editors: Tim McAvoy
Nancy Kort

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