Recently, the Scholastic Arts competition honored two educators during their annual awards program. The junior high school “Inspiring Teacher” award was presented to UCS teacher Lisa Grunewald. A 15-year member of our staff, Dr. Grunewald shared that she knew at a very early age her life goal was to teach art. After 14 years as a successful junior high teacher, Dr. Grunewald now teaches photography at Henry Ford II High School.

Her success is rooted in her goal to inspire students, to push them to the best of their abilities and to create a safe environment for students to express themselves.

In the words of her students: “I think she truly believes that any student has potential. She has inspired me to do my best in every piece of art I do and that every piece of art is good and unique in its own way.”

“She is so amazing and understanding and she always loves to see what potential every student has. She has inspired me to continue with art and put all of my effort into every piece.”

“I just want to thank her for everything she has taught me as an artist and as a person.”

Utica Community Schools is a district of high expectations. We want every student to experience the joy that comes when someone believes in them. We want our students to know that they can achieve great things.

In her own quiet way, Dr. Grunewald reflects what we know is true at Utica Community Schools. Our teachers and staff members are committed to helping students succeed both academically and in life, regardless of the challenges that they face in or out of school.

Every day, these high standards are reflected in the work that occurs in our classrooms. Our teachers and staff members recognize gifts and nurture talents; they inspire students to develop a love of learning and a desire to excel.

When our students receive academic honors or when they win competitions, that success is shared with teachers and staff members who poured their hearts into helping those students succeed.

National credit agencies reviewing Utica Community Schools recognized the importance of the Board of Education’s commitment to responsible financial management and its good stewardship of resources. This commitment was identified as creating long-term stability and strength, that translates into saving money and reducing costs for Utica Community Schools taxpayers.

Here is why: a credit rating by major credit agencies – such as Moody’s or Standard and Poor’s – is required each time there is a public sale of bonds.

The UCS Board of Education recently approved the sale of $100 million in bonds as the first phase of a proposal approved by voters in November, 2018.

Paul Stauder, Managing Director with PFM Financial Advisors LLC and the district’s bond consultant, recently reported that UCS has a stronger rating than neighboring Macomb County districts, and that the district’s focus on financial accountability saves taxpayers $3 million for each level of improvement in the rating.

Stauder noted three factors that result in saved costs through an improved credit rating:

• The district has made difficult financial decisions to bring expenditures in line with revenue provided by state lawmakers.

Board of Education members elect officers

Four Utica Community Schools Board of Education members were elected by their colleagues as officers at the January 14 organizational meeting.

The Board elected Dr. Robert Ross as president, Dr. Mary Thomas as vice president, Mrs. Michele Templeton as treasurer, and Mrs. Denyel Nesovski as secretary for 2019.

Dr. Ross, unanimously elected as president, will preside over regular and special meetings and provide leadership duties as required by the office.

He brings experience and stability to the role of Board president. Dr. Ross has served on the Board of Education since 2004, including the past seven years as treasurer. Over the past 15 years, UCS has continued to receive unmodified audits from its independent auditor – the highest level of fiscal accountability.

“The election of officers to the Board of Education is an important, solemn responsibility,” President Dr. Ross said. “The Board is a fiduciary of the district and our members are committed to the responsible financial management and good stewardship of taxpayer funds.”

A Sterling Heights resident and professor at University of Detroit Mercy, Dr. Ross has four children who have
**Kindergarten Open House set for March 13 at all elementary schools**

Utica Community Schools will be hosting its annual open house on March 13 to begin registration for students entering kindergarten in the fall of 2019. All 25 UCS elementary schools will hold an open house for new kindergarten students at 7:00 p.m. At the open house, parents will have the opportunity to learn about the district’s curriculum, meet the teachers and building staff and submit school registration forms.

UCS offers students full-day comprehensive instruction in core academic areas of English Language Arts, reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies. Students also receive instruction from specialized teachers for media center/technology, art, music and physical education.

In addition, UCS offers a personalized blended learning program at the early elementary level that allows teachers to use technology – iPads, laptops and SMART boards – to support an environment based on each student’s learning style and pace. The program has been honored at national and state levels for its innovation and impact on learning.

Children are eligible for kindergarten if they turn five years old on or before September 1, 2019. However, children who turn five between September 1 and December 1, 2019 are eligible to enroll in kindergarten if their parents submit a waiver form.

For more information, please visit: www.uticak12.org/2019kindergarten

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**Items Necessary for Registration**

- An original birth certificate or certified copy, with raised seal, issued by the clerk of the county where your child was born or the health department in the birth state;
- Your child’s health immunization record, including vision and hearing screenings. Be sure to schedule immunization updates early, these appointments are often limited;
- Photo I.D. (Driver’s license or work photo I.D.);
- Proof of residency, such as property tax bill, closing papers or lease agreement. Please know that we are not able to accept utility bills.

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**In a social media world, it takes a village to raise a positive digital citizen**

Throughout classrooms in Utica Community Schools, the importance of being an effective and positive user of online resources is reinforced every day.

Creating digital citizens among UCS students remains one of four key focus areas for Utica Community Schools and is the foundation of several local and national partnerships.

“Accountability and high expectations help students recognize their full potential,” said Superintendent Dr. Christine Johns. “UCS students are challenged to be a positive representative of their community by demonstrating respect for all people, not just while shopping or on an athletic field, but also on Twitter and Instagram.”

Across the district there are examples that show the district’s work to promote digital citizenship:

- The district has partnered with Common Sense Media to integrate Digital Citizenship principles throughout its K-12 curriculum
- Local law enforcement agencies stress safety and good-decision making on the internet as part of their sixth-grade DARE and Smart Moves Programs
- Students in UCS commit to being a positive digital citizen when they log on to their computers as part of an internet use agreement

Digital citizenship lessons begin in elementary media centers, where students learn how to be safe by protecting their privacy and reputation, understanding the importance of evaluating online content and avoiding activity that could harm themselves and others.

“Students are immersed in technology at school and at home,” said Beacon Tree Media Specialist Jacqueline Zawierucha. “They must have digital citizenship knowledge in their back pocket at all times so they are ready for any situation they may face. Whether it be cyber bullying, sharing personal information or understanding copyright, they need to know how to handle every situation.”

Parents are being asked to support this effort by being aware of their children’s online activities and help guide them to sites that contain appropriate material.

Common Sense Media – a national resource for effective use of digital resources – has videos and tip sheets to help students guide their digital world. Visit them at https://www.commonsensemedia.org.

In Utica Community Schools, the district is committed to helping students recognize that mistakes are teachable moments where growth and change can occur in positive ways.
Points of Pride

Graduate named nation’s chief economist
A 1986 Utica Community Schools graduate has been named the chief economist for the Federal Reserve Board.

Stevenson High School graduate Stacey M. Tevlin has been named director of the Division of Research and Statistics for the Federal Reserve Board. She will oversee economic analysis, forecasting and research related to the domestic economy and financial markets, several major economic measurement programs such as Industrial Production and the Survey of Consumer Finances and research and analysis in support of the Federal Reserve’s financial stability, supervision, and regulatory activities.

After graduating from Stevenson, Tevlin earned her undergraduate degree from Northwestern University and a doctorate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Seniors earn Career and Technical Education honors
Two seniors have been honored as students of the year by the Macomb County Career Technical Education Administrators Association.

Anthony Salazar, of Utica High School and Angel Sanders, of Stevenson High School, were honored at the 27th annual Career Technical Education (CTE) awards breakfast February 1.

A school valedictorian, Salazar plans to attend Oakland University to pursue a career in physical therapy.

A student in Stevenson’s Medical Science Program, Sanders will be attending Oakland University to pursue a career in Health Sciences.

In addition to honoring the two UCS students, the county CTE organization also honored New Link Diamond and Granite as a UCS Business/Industry partner.

Owner John Ferrozzo has sponsored co-op interns for more than 25 years.

Grad named among top 21 Michigan State University students
A recent Utica Community Schools graduate has been named among the top 21 students at Michigan State University.

Dan Jian, a human biology major in the Lyman Briggs College and a member of the Honors College, earned the Board of Trustees Award from Michigan State University.

The award recognized graduating students for achieving the highest scholastic average at the close of their last semester. All students receiving this year’s Board of Trustees’ Award earned a 4.0 GPA.

UCS teams capture top spots in national dance competition
To the chants of “UCS” “UCS,” teams from all four high schools came together to represent their community at the National Dance Competition in Orlando, Florida on February 1 through 3. When the tournament ended, district teams had captured several top awards to put UCS squarely on the national map.

Teams perform for two-minutes and are evaluated on skill, technique, choreography, executive, performance quality and overall impression.

For the third year in a row, the Eisenhower team earned double titles. The team placed first in medium hip hop and medium jazz.

In addition, the Utica High School team placed eighth in the jazz competition and 12th in the small pom.

The Stevenson High School team placed 7th in Game Day, 8th in medium jazz and 7th in medium pom.

The Henry Ford II team placed 17th in Game Day.

UCS teams practice for the competition weekly from mid-summer to the January national tournament. There are more than 40 teams in each division. Teams qualify for the national tournament after earning top ratings at state and regional competitions.

Career Expo and College Fair put students on path for post-secondary success
Families are invited to attend two events in March that provide information which can help guide future success for UCS graduates: Career Expo on March 21 and College Fair on March 28.

The events will help families create a bridge between career and college goals and the nationally-recognized programs offered in Utica Community Schools.

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Long-term Stability

Continued from front page

- The lack of flexibility to raise more revenue under the current State of Michigan school aid formula
- Reduced enrollment due to declining birth rates
- Flat revenue streams in the face of growing staffing costs, such as pension and health care

The Utica leadership team and Board of Education continue to be committed to keeping promises to taxpayers. At the same time, it is rewarding to have credit agencies affirming the ongoing commitment to responsible financial management.
Students exhibit artistry through Scholastic Art Awards

Students from throughout the district earned impressive awards during the Michigan Thumb Region Scholastic Art Awards.

Over 180 art awards were received by 111 UCS students including 40 Gold Key awards and one Best of Show winner. Savannah Jodway, a senior from Utica High, received the Best of Show for her portfolio “Steel Wool Study.” Joshua Etheridge is her art teacher.

Macomb Community College and the College for Creative Studies sponsor the regional awards featuring more than 2,600 works of art and approximately 70 portfolios from middle school and high school students. With the assistance of volunteer art teachers, the works are adjudicated and selected for Honorable Mentions, Silver and Gold Key Awards, American Vision nominations and Best of Show Portfolios. Regional Gold Key works automatically advance to national judging in New York City. National awards will be announced on March 12, 2019.

The regional awards ceremony took place on January 28, 2019 at the Macomb Center for Performing Arts. The ceremony was followed by a reception and exhibit in the Lorenzo Cultural Center.

U.S. 2019 Gold Key Recipients

**Utica High**
- Olivia Adams - Gold Key Photography
- Christina D'Alessandro - Gold Key Photography
- Jillian Jezak - Gold Key Photography
- Savannah Jodway - Gold Key Art Portfolio
- Savannah Jodway - Two Gold Keys Photography
- Haley Kelly - Gold Key Photography
- Emily Kola - Gold Key Photography
- Isabel Redmond - Gold Key Painting
- Madeline Riggs - Two Gold Keys Photography
- Annalise Trenkamp - Two Gold Keys Photography
- Annalise Trenkamp - Gold Key Mix Media

**Eisenhower High**
- Bryanna Ankawi - Gold Key Photography
- Diana Demey - Two Gold Keys Photography
- Aislin Kearney - Gold Key Film & Animation
- Lauren Seymour - Gold Key Photography
- Abigail Wittwer - Gold Key Photography

**Henry Ford II High**
- Kaitlyn Kalamajka - Gold Key Drawing
- Kaden Rucinski - Gold Key Digital Art
- Elaina Schrief - Gold Key Photography
- Kyle Smith - Gold Key Photography
- Katelyn Swope - Gold Key Printmaking

**Stevenson High**
- Jessica Culverhouse - Gold Key Photography
- Chantel Gurak - Gold Key Photography
- Katherine Payne - Gold Key Photography

**Eppler Junior High**
- Kaitlyn Grishaj - Gold Key Photography
- Paige Iezzi - Gold Key Photography
- Jacob Lewis - Gold Key Drawing
- Lillian Natushko - Gold Key Sculpture
- Madelyn Karrandja - Gold Key Photography
- Sophia Wenzel - Gold Key Painting

**Davis Junior High**
- Everett Felsch - Gold Key Photography

Several works from Savannah Jodway’s Best of Show portfolio

UCS secondary art teachers are: Joshua Etheridge and Jennifer Allore of Utica High; Nancy Dutia, Josephine Braun, Jennifer Ramirez and Michael Allore of Eisenhower High; Amy May and Lisa Grunewald of Henry Ford II High; Patti Fields and Christina Dawson of Stevenson High; Michael Allore and Megan Berry of Utica Center for Science and Industry; Kristine Cooper of Malow Junior High; Chris Brunson and Marsha Sevek of Shelby Junior High; Emily Ortaviano of Eppler Junior High; and Gail Borowski of Davis Junior High.

www.uticak12.org
Find updates from Utica Community Schools on:

Board of Education officers

Continued from front page

Dr. Thomas will serve as the Board’s vice president. A four-year member of the Board, Dr. Thomas is a counselor at Oakland Community College. She has one child in Utica Community Schools.

Mrs. Templeton was elected as treasurer after serving two years as the Board’s vice president. A resident of Sterling Heights, who has been on the Board for 14 years, Mrs. Templeton is a lifelong resident of the district and the parent of a Utica Community Schools graduate.

Mrs. Nesovski, a two-year member, will serve as the Board’s secretary. A Shelby Township resident, she has three children who attend Utica Community Schools. She is a data analyst at United Shore Financial Services, Inc.

Trustees for 2019 are Mrs. Jennifer Prybys, Mrs. Kimberly Becker and Mrs. Kelli Rankin.

Prior to the organizational meeting, a swearing in ceremony was held for three Board of Education members elected in November, 2018. Oaths of office for six-year terms were administered to incumbent Mrs. Templeton and newly elected members, Mrs. Becker and Mrs. Rankin.

The UCS Board of Education remains committed to working collaboratively to implement the district’s strategic direction and district priorities that continue the tradition of academic excellence.

Inspiring Children

Continued from front page

When these same students share what teachers or staff members have meant to them, it reinforces why we are in education today!

We congratulate Dr. Grunewald for a job well done; and at the same time, thank all UCS teachers who quietly inspire the children of our community to engage their passion and find joy in learning and accomplishment.

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