

UMS Announces “DTE Energy Foundation School of the Year and Educator of the Year” Awards

Awards Honor Arts Academy @ the Plymouth-Canton Educational Park and Ann Arbor Public School Teachers Ann Marie Borders and Karen McDonald

Ann Arbor, MI (January 12, 2015) — The **University Musical Society (UMS)** is pleased to honor **Arts Academy @ the Plymouth-Canton Educational Park** as the 2015 **DTE Energy Foundation School of the Year** and Ann Arbor Public School Teachers **Ann Marie Borders** and **Karen McDonald** as the 2015 **DTE Energy Foundation Educators of the Year**. The recipients were nominated through a public nomination process. The awards will be formally presented during the 20th Annual Ford Honors Gala (benefiting UMS Education and Community Engagement programs) on Sunday, January 25. The Ford Honors Gala will take place in the **Michigan League** (911 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor) on the University of Michigan campus and follows a Hill Auditorium concert by the **Mariinsky Orchestra**. **DTE Energy Foundation** generously sponsors this award through a financial commitment to UMS’s Youth Education Program.

“It’s important to recognize the tremendous difference educators like Karen McDonald and Ann Marie Borders and schools like the Arts Academy @ the Plymouth-Canton Educational Park can make in the lives of young people and in the community at large,” said Faye Alexander Nelson, Vice President of Public Affairs for DTE Energy and president of the DTE Energy Foundation. “We also want to shine a light on cultural institutions such as the University Musical Society that enrich our lives through innovative educational programming.”

The **DTE Energy Foundation School of the Year** award honors the **Arts Academy @ the Plymouth-Canton Educational Park** for its dedication and commitment to arts education. An arts magnet high school within the Plymouth-Canton complex, The Arts Academy is a model among its peers in the integration of arts into the curriculum.

The 9th and 10th grade curriculum at the Arts Academy is structured to provide creative, collaborative opportunities for students to express newfound academic understandings in English, Science, and Social Studies through the arts. Starting in grade 11, students take advantage of upper-level arts integrated courses such as World Drama, Modern Literature and the Arts, Graphic Novel, and Honors Humanities. These courses require students to activate higher-order processing skills in order to create musical, visual, kinesthetic, and dramatic recounts of their learning. In addition, students participate in an annual student-funded, student-directed benefit concert to raise funds for new courses; students also benefit from a partnership with the Michigan Philharmonic and regular attendance at UMS School Day Performances. In addition to supporting academic rigor, arts-integrated learning at the Arts Academy has created a welcoming, safe environment for students to find their voice, articulate it brilliantly, and use it to act as agents of change in their community.

Ann Marie Borders and **Karen McDonald** are honored as the **DTE Energy Foundation Educators of the Year** for their passionate commitment to integrating the arts into core curriculum of Logan and Bryant and Pettengill Elementary Schools, respectively, and most recently at Carpenter Elementary School. In an unprecedented tie, the selection committee chose both Ms. Borders and Ms. McDonald to receive the award.

A longtime general education teacher in the Ann Arbor Public School District, **Ann Marie Borders** returned to the music classroom last year. Her unique experience and perspective allows her to seamlessly integrate music and academics. Lower elementary students delight in Mrs. Borders' original alphabet song compositions and raps, all incorporating the letter, phonic sound, and words for daily phonics practice. Musical symbols, terms, and instruments are introduced using matching card games, online music games, and a word wall to support early reading skills. Older students incorporate a weekly journal into their music lessons, generating written responses to classroom listening sessions to music from around the globe. Students reflect on the composer's style, tempo, instruments used, as well as thoughts and ideas inspired by the music. Mrs. Borders constantly seeks out new opportunities to integrate arts into the curriculum; recently, a classroom enjoyed a field trip to the Henry Ford Museum and worked with Mrs. Borders to write an original song about the experience. She writes and secures grants to support student learning on all levels; in the last year alone, Mrs. Borders secured thirteen grants to support everything from the acquisition of iPads for the music classroom to hats and gloves for students in need.

Carpenter Elementary School art teacher **Karen McDonald** has also fully embraced arts integration, incorporating it into her daily instruction. Working collaboratively with her general education colleagues, Ms. McDonald has structured her visual art lessons to explore student academics in new and exciting ways; recently, students applied reading comprehension and analysis to a design project when they were asked to create an original book cover. Ms. McDonald also collaborates with parents and community members on art units; students have had in-class Skype sessions with a celebrated African American artist, attended glassblowing demonstrations, and created a group sculpture with students in other Ann Arbor Public Schools. Ms. McDonald's students are given opportunities to exhibit their work and field questions about their creations from parents, teachers, and community members. A longtime member of the UMS Teacher Insight Group, Karen has been an active participant in UMS teacher workshops, utilizing this resource to continually bring excellent instruction to her students. Ms. McDonald is admired for her creative approach to melding visual art with social studies, science, math, and language arts, and for the sense of community and inspiration she creates among her students.

UMS President Ken Fischer noted, "UMS is thoroughly impressed with the work that the Arts Academy @ the Plymouth-Canton Educational Park is doing. Not only do Arts Academy students demonstrate solid comprehension of their academics, they are nurtured and trained to take that knowledge and apply it to their artistic pursuits. This integrated approach cements student learning and provides hands-on experience with innovation, collaboration, communication, creativity, and other 21st century leadership skills sure to make the community-at-large a better place for years to come."

Ken Fischer continues, "UMS is also very pleased to honor Ann Arbor Public School teachers Karen McDonald and Ann Marie Borders for their commitment to their students through arts integration. Through their efforts, students have new ways to understand, interpret, and communicate the core curriculum through the arts. We are also very grateful for the DTE Energy Foundation's renewed commitment to UMS and its recognition of the value and excellence of UMS's artistic and educational endeavors."

The **DTE Energy Foundation** is the philanthropic arm of DTE Energy. The Foundation directs its

contributions and involvement to support initiatives dedicated to developing the human and economic potential of the communities it serves.

One of the oldest performing arts presenters in the country, the **University Musical Society (UMS)** is now in its 136th season. With a program steeped in music, dance, and theater performed at the highest international standards of quality, UMS contributes to a vibrant cultural community by presenting approximately 60-75 performances and over 100 free or low-cost educational and community engagement activities each season. The **UMS Education and Community Engagement Program** reaches up to 25,000 children and adults each year through a diverse mix of initiatives and educational events. These programs give many young students their first opportunities to experience the live performing arts. UMS continues to take a leadership role in advocating for transformative arts education experiences for our community.

The annual **Ford Honors Program** celebrates an artist or ensemble that has made significant contributions to international music history while also having a deep connection to the UMS's history. This year, the **Mariinsky Orchestra and Valery Gergiev** have been named recipients of the **2015 UMS Distinguished Artist Award**. A gala dinner will be held after their concert on Sunday, January 25 in the **Michigan League** (911 N. University Ave.), with proceeds benefiting UMS education programs. For information about the gala dinner, please call 734-764-8489 or email ralesko@umich.edu. The **Ford Honors Program** recognizes the longtime generous support of UMS's Education and Community Engagement Program by **Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services**.

Media Inquiries / Further Information:

Television crews and still-photographers are welcome to cover this event; please contact Truly Render at 734-647-4020 to arrange media coverage.

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