

UMS Announces Winner of 2019 DTE Energy Foundation Educator of the Year Award

Award Honors Ann Arbor Public Schools Teacher Caroline Fitzgerald from Scarlett Middle School

Ann Arbor, MI (April 26, 2019) — The **University Musical Society (UMS)** and the **DTE Energy Foundation** are pleased to honor Scarlett Middle School band teacher **Caroline Fitzgerald** as the **2019 DTE Energy Foundation Educator of the Year**.

The award recognizes and celebrates educators who value the importance of arts education and create a culture for the arts to flourish in their school communities. Ms. Fitzgerald was nominated through a public nomination process. The DTE Energy Foundation is sponsoring the award as part of its annual grant support for UMS Youth Education Programs.

As part of the award, UMS will provide complimentary tickets and transportation for Ms. Fitzgerald to bring one class to a UMS School Day Performance next season, additional complimentary tickets to a mainstage UMS performance, and a \$200 award honorarium. UMS will also work with Ms. Fitzgerald to bring a UMS touring artist to Scarlett for a class visit or school assembly.

Ms. Fitzgerald's focus on the arts has extended beyond her work in the music classroom with a passion that permeates throughout the entire school, the Ann Arbor Public School system, and the greater community. She demonstrates an incredible investment in her students and believes that through music she can support her students becoming confident, self-assured young adults. Her work at Scarlett highlights the important role of music instruction in supporting students' overall engagement and academic success.

Her fervor for music inspires the entire faculty and student body to incorporate the arts into school-wide events. A recent example of this is an event call "Friday Night Lights," where Ms. Fitzgerald partnered

with the school's Physical Education teachers to host a football game for eighth graders. During this event, the eighth grade girls' Physical Education class played a football game while the boys' Physical Education class cheered and danced and the Band class played the pep band music. Many of the younger classes joined in on the festivities to support their schoolmates, fostering a profound sense of school spirit.

In her classroom, Ms. Fitzgerald keeps students engaged by using culturally responsive teaching techniques, like incorporating pop culture references in lesson plans, exploring genres that are of interest to her students, and working collaboratively with students to select and arrange music that is meaningful to them when programming performances. By introducing her students to culturally diverse artists and visitors she helps encourage a curiosity for music from all areas of the globe.

"We believe that exposure to artistic experiences in education helps young people to become innovative, collaborative, and creative thinkers, as well as compassionate and open-minded individuals," said UMS director of Education and Community Engagement Jim Leija. "We're so pleased to have the DTE Energy Foundation as a long-standing partner that recognizes the value of the arts in all levels of education. Together, we're proud to Honor Ms. Fitzgerald for fostering a love of the arts in her classroom, school, community, and beyond."

"The DTE Energy Foundation is proud to support the University Musical Society and to honor Ms. Fitzgerald for her extraordinary work with Scarlett Middle School students," said Lynette Dowler, president of the DTE Energy Foundation. "Ms. Fitzgerald's ingenuity in introducing students to artists from around the world adds so much to the critical role music education already plays in their academic and creative development."

Visit ums.org/DTEAward for more information and video content.

ABOUT DTE ENERGY FOUNDATION

The DTE Energy Foundation is the philanthropic arm of DTE Energy, continuing the legacy of community support and involvement of its electric and natural gas utilities, which serve 2.2 million electric customers and 1.3 million natural gas customers in Michigan. In 2018, the DTE Energy Foundation

awarded hundreds of grants to nonprofits throughout the company's service territories. Visit **DTEFoundation.com** for more information on the Foundation's work across the state.

ABOUT UMS

A recipient of the 2014 National Medal of Arts, UMS (also known as the University Musical Society) contributes to a vibrant cultural community by connecting audiences with performing artists from around the world in uncommon and engaging experiences. Founded in 1879, UMS is one of the oldest performing arts presenters in the country. An independent non-profit organization affiliated with the University of Michigan, UMS presents over 70 music, theater, and dance performances by professional touring artists each season, along with over 200 free educational activities. UMS is committed to bold artistic leadership, engaged learning through the arts, and access and inclusiveness. A national leader in student arts engagement, the organization has co-commissioned and supported the production of nearly 80 new or reimagined works since 1990. Matthew VanBesien became the organization's seventh president in July 2017.

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