



DTE Energy Foundation Honors Top Michigan Nonprofits With 2008 Achieving Excellence Awards

DETROIT, June 3 /PRNewswire/ -- Ten of Michigan's most exemplary nonprofit organizations have been named recipients of the DTE Energy Foundation's 2008 Achieving Excellence Awards -- the state's largest corporate grant competition for nonprofit organizations. The Foundation recognized the organizations for their accomplishments in five categories: Collaboration, Innovation, Leadership, Merger and Sustainability.

Winners of the 2008 Achieving Excellence Awards are: Forgotten Harvest Inc., of Oak Park; Sanilac County Kids' Connection of Sandusky; Salvation Army Harbor Light of Eastern Michigan of Detroit; The Detroit Chamber Winds of Southfield; Judson Center of Royal Oak; ArtServe Michigan of Wixom; the Michigan Nonprofit Association of Lansing; Think Detroit PAL; Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit; and Southwest Solutions of Detroit.

"The DTE Energy Foundation believes that nonprofit organizations that strive to maximize their time, money and efforts should receive praise, gratitude and support. That is why we created the Achieving Excellence Awards in 2003 and have presented more than a million dollars to award recipients since then," said Fred Shell, DTE Energy vice president of corporate and government affairs and president of the DTE Energy Foundation.

Forgotten Harvest Inc. received the competition's largest grant, \$80,000, as the winner of the Innovation Award, which recognizes outstanding work by institutions addressing critical community needs resulting from Michigan's economic downturn. Forgotten Harvest provides more than 4.5 million tons of nutritious food to a growing number of metro Detroit residents through its "just in time" efforts to rescue surplus food from grocery donors.

The Sanilac County Kids' Connection and Salvation Army Harbor Light of Eastern Michigan were both winners of the Collaboration Award, which recognizes successful collaboration of three or more organizations. A county-wide collaboration between 12 organizations, The Sanilac County Kids' Connection was created to address gaps and duplication of services in programs for youths and families. The organization received a \$25,000 grant.

Salvation Army Harbor Light received a \$50,000 award for its partnership with the Children's Tooth Fairy Foundation, the University of Detroit Mercy School of Dentistry and the Michigan Department of Community Health to provide dental hygiene and oral health care to homeless families.

The Detroit Chamber Winds and the Judson Center shared the Leadership Award, which honors organizations that have developed and implemented a sound plan for internal leadership development. The Detroit Chamber Winds received a \$25,000 grant for developing a management model that ensures leadership development and lays the groundwork for the organization to become a long-term contributor to the arts.

The Judson Center, which provides community-based human services in 10 counties, received a \$65,000 award for execution of its CEO transition plan and implementing comprehensive organizational goals for succession planning.

Three organizations shared the Merger Award, which recognizes organizations that have successfully completed mergers. ArtServe Michigan, the Michigan Nonprofit Association and Think Detroit PAL each received a \$25,000 grant.

ArtServe Michigan merged with the Michigan Association of Community Arts Agencies to strengthen the state's arts and cultural sector. The Michigan Nonprofit Association merged with the Connect Michigan Alliance to better ensure that every Michigan community is served by a vibrant nonprofit sector. The merger of two youth development organizations, Think Detroit and the Detroit Police Athletic League, created Think Detroit PAL. The merger resulted in increased outreach, a more diversified funding base, reduced overhead and substantial savings.

Two Detroit organizations were recognized with Sustainability Awards for achieving financial stability through a diversified revenue base. The Mosaic Youth Theatre, which provides youth development through the performing arts, received a \$50,000 award for increasing revenue by 52 percent in one year through individual giving, innovative earned income streams and cost controls. Southwest Solutions, one of the nation's largest nonprofit housing corporations, received a \$30,000 grant for efforts that dramatically increased the organization's net worth.

Nearly 100 nonprofit organizations statewide submitted applications for this year's Achieving Excellence Awards. The finalists were judged by an independent panel of leaders in Michigan's philanthropic community. To be considered for the Achieving Excellence Awards, organizations had to be tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and be located within DTE Energy's service area.

The DTE Energy Foundation is the philanthropic arm of DTE Energy, continuing the legacy of community support and involvement of its principal operating subsidiaries, Detroit Edison and MichCon. The Foundation directs its contributions and involvement to support initiatives dedicated to developing the human and economic potential of the communities it serves.

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