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**MEDIA RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

March 4, 2021

**LOCAL BAND TEACHER RECIPIENT OF PROVINCIAL AWARD**

*Alberta Band Association (ABA) commends local band director Sarah Drew for her ‘dedication, commitment, and contribution to band music in Alberta’.*

CALGARY — Local band director Sarah Drew has been selected for the prestigious Elkhorn Band Director of the Year Award. The Elkhorn Award recognizes an exceptional band director who has ‘exemplified dedication and outstanding commitment and contribution to band music in Alberta.’ The provincial award has been presented annually since its inauguration in 1974 with all past winners voting on the next award recipient. Kirk Wassmer, last year’s Elkhorn Award winner, presented Sarah the award virtually this year, on behalf of the Alberta Band Association (ABA).

“I have gotten to know Sarah through her work on the ABA Board of Directors, and have witnessed first-hand the tremendous skill, energy and dedication that she possesses. She is an outstanding role model to her colleagues. She is without question a master teacher to all of her students, but it is her caring, empathetic spirit that opens that door to allow learning to take place.” Kirk said. “Her performing groups have consistently achieved high standards of excellence, but she is most proud of who her students become as caring, creative and confident citizens”.

Sarah has been teaching middle school band in Calgary for the past 32 years and has taught grades 6 to 9 at the Calgary Girls Charter School for the last three years. Her passion has always been in starting young instrumentalists in beginning band. This has led to her co-writing “a beginning band method called “Kodaly for Band” which is in use in many schools across North America,” Sarah also “founded the Sher-Wood-Like-To-Play Adult Community Band of which she was the Artistic Director in Calgary for 17 years, as well as Director of the Cochrane Children’s Choir,” Kirk said in his presentation speech.

“Being nominated is a huge honour because the award winner is decided by past recipients. The list of past recipients is full of amazing Alberta band directors, many of whom I look up to and admire.” Sarah said. “It does feel ironic to be getting an award as a band director in a year when I have no band to direct. I am still teaching music, but in a whole new way. I have always believed music is for everyone, and with COVID we are bringing music to every student at our school.”

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