

Japhet School

Character | Academics | Leadership



Reaching Out

How we have expanded the Japhet School program to serve the community, teach more children, and advocate for good character

“They may be small, but they’re mighty.”

This is how former board member of Birmingham Public Schools and current co-chair of the Michigan Schools of Character program, Lori Soifer, recently introduced Japhet School to educators focused on teaching character. A Japhet administrator joined Soifer to bestow a district award in May. Advocating for character education, wherever it can grow, is just one of many ways Japhet School goes beyond our school walls.

Michigan Schools of Character

Japhet has been the official sponsor of the Michigan Schools of Character program since it began more than 10 years ago. We were the first school in

Michigan and first independent school in the country to be named a National School of Character by the Character Education Partnership (Character.org). Since then we’ve generously shared our ideas and philosophy with schools across the state. Japhet staff and Soifer read applications, visit schools, and have spoken at conferences.

Royal Oak Citizen of the Year Award

2018 will be the first year that Japhet School serves as the official and single sponsor of the Royal Oak Citizen of the Year Award, an honor bestowed on a Royal Oak resident or businessperson who leads with exemplary character. It’s a natural fit for Japhet to serve in this capacity because the award connects to our mission. Japhet

students will help present the award in fall at the event organized by the Royal Oak Chamber of Commerce. Japhet is a member of the ROCC as well as the chambers of Troy and Clawson.

STEAM Camp

Carrie Huber, Preschool teacher, and Cora Cachat, Intermediate and Upper Class math and science teacher, co-taught a summer camp (photos above) that attracted almost 30 children, a third of which were not current Japhet students. It was a great success, and children enjoyed dozens of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) activities during the camp week. Parents wanted more weeks!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCT 25

18 Reasons for Hope Luncheon

See our full calendar online at japhetschool.org

NOV 21

Gratitude Service

DEC 6

Spaghetti Supper & Family Service Night

DEC 19 & 20

Holiday Giving Concerts

Message from the Head of School

“It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.” —Albert Einstein



As your new Head of School, I'm filled with gratitude for the founders of Japhet School, who 45 years ago were motivated and inspired to lay the foundation

for our mission, “to nurture and prepare each child for life by integrating character education with a strong academic program.”

Through the years, devoted trustees, Heads of School, faculty, and staff have continued to fulfill the vision that the founders knew would forever benefit Japhet's students. We don't have to look too far to see marvelous examples of this vision in action! Just this summer, Japhet teachers Carrie Huber and Cora Cachet led a STEAM Camp for children. The joys of exploration, laughter, enthusiasm, and discovery emanated from their classroom through the whole building.

As we join together as the Japhet family at the beginning of the 2018/2019 school

year, let's dedicate ourselves to helping children grow as individuals and as confident learners. Together let's acknowledge the importance and relevance of the Japhet School philosophy:

1. A school should educate the whole child, establishing a strong basis for academic, physical, moral, social, and spiritual development.
2. Character education is an essential part of a child's education.
3. Students learn best when information is shared with creativity, enthusiasm, and in a variety of ways that supports different learning styles.
4. Education of children is a shared responsibility between the school, family, and the community.
5. The school should present its instructional program in a way that supports and enriches the basic family unit.
6. With the gift of knowledge and the understanding of moral and spiritual values comes an obligation to help mankind.
7. The best education includes instruction in basic study habits, test taking, active listening, cooperative

- learning, and disciplined effort.
8. Every student can experience success in proportion to his/her receptivity to instruction and application.
 9. The faculty and staff should not limit student progress or success with negative predictions, comments, or labels.
 10. Children express innate purity, goodness, and health.

As you read through the pages of this newsletter, you'll find many examples of former and current Japhet students uniquely expressing joy and dedication to their experiences as life-long learners and thoughtful leaders. Truly each student has a special place, unique to them, in our hearts. When a child is taught the joy of learning, it becomes a life-long process that never ends. What wonderful role models for us all!

Join with me in celebrating the beginning of a new school year that will bring a multitude of opportunities for growth and development for every Japhet student!

Gratefully,
Kerri G. Vizona
Head of School

Welcome, New Trustees

Susie Golbiw, Lisa Niemkiewicz, and **Stacey Sitarek** have been elected to serve for three school years beginning with 2018/2019.

Susie Golbiw is a graduate of the University of Michigan and has worked for AT&T, owned a catering business, and after a successful career at Xerox Corporation, she is happy to be at home with her two children. Susie is an active volunteer for her church and currently serves as the librarian in the Birmingham Christian Science Reading Room. Susie is the parent of both a Japhet alumnus and a current student.

Lisa Niemkiewicz, a current Japhet School parent, is a partner at T.V.N. Inc., a meetings and events consulting company. She studied theatre arts at NYU, U of D Greece, and the University of London, culminating in a BA from MSU with strengths in Deaf Education. She has been a member of the Screen Actors Guild for 25 years, a board member for A Mission of Hope, an American Sign Language interpreter, and active with Mentor Michigan.

Stacey Sitarek is the parent of a Japhet alumna, former president of our Parent Support Group, and a registered nurse. She holds a BSN from the University of Detroit Mercy and currently works at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak doing cancer research. She has also worked as a consultant for start-up healthcare companies. Stacey enjoys baking, traveling, gardening, and volunteering for charity and community events.

Moving forward, **Frank Edwards** will continue as board president, **Sheila Chaps** as vice-president, **Jay Schmitt** as treasurer, and **Bruce Kasl** as secretary. **Susie Auten, Dan Commer, Denise Deane, Esther Dusenberry, Cheryl Haitcho,** and **Martha Moyer** complete the full Board of Trustees for 2018/2019. A brief biography of each trustee is on our website.

The Japhet community joins the board in extending sincere gratitude to **Don Button, Erik Golbiw, Victoria Lehman,** and **Dr. John White** who have completed their terms.

ANNOUNCING!

Alumni Legacy Grant

A Japhet School trustee has said, “Japhet School students are prepared to be world citizens through understanding, honoring, and demonstrating character. They have been cultivated to wonder.” The Alumni Legacy Grant, which is \$1,000 annually for full-time students and \$500 annually for part-time students, is a special scholarship from Japhet School to the **children of Japhet alumni**, and/or the **grandchildren of Japhet School faculty and staff** (current and former). The grant will be automatically applied toward tuition every year that the grant continues to be available.



L-R: Devan Edwards, Santino Giglio, Annabelle Sitarek, Katelyn Homes, Lily Honner, Keiffer Button, and Grace Wasiluk.

Our Fantastic 45th Class

“Every graduate earned a place on Japhet’s Special Honor Roll this year with at least a 93% average, and had high marks in attitude, effort, and character,” Cathy Mohan said as she introduced the class of 2018. “These students prioritize their academics but also know what it means to lead with character.”

KEIFFER BUTTON

Keiffer joined Japhet in Preschool. Keiffer loves to be outside in all types of weather and enjoys boating, skiing, and playing ice hockey. Teachers describe Keiffer as creative, funny, outgoing, thoughtful, energetic, light-hearted, and accepting. Keiffer plays the piano, and says he hopes to be a scientist or a cook (or both!). Keiffer’s parents would like to thank all the individuals who nurtured, influenced, inspired and taught him over the years at Japhet. Keiffer plans to attend Shrine High School in the fall.

DEVAN EDWARDS

Devan started attending Japhet as a Preschool student. Devan has a great appreciation of art, and he enjoys painting and drawing. He’s involved with Gilda’s Club, the Detroit School of Rock and Pop, and participated in Japhet’s Kids for Peace chapter. Devan is also a skilled conversationalist and able to defend either side of an issue with poise and confidence. Faculty and staff describe Devan as curious, imaginative,

techy, and as a big-picture thinker and problem solver. Devan’s parents feel he displays good judgment and initiative in everything he decides to do. Devan will be attending Roeper for high school.

SANTINO GIGLIO

Santino came to Japhet in 3rd grade. Santino is honest, sincere, and considerate. He has a knack for talking with people of all ages as a friend to everyone and a loving big brother. Santino is athletic and scores well as a gymnastics competitor. His teachers know him to be a talented artist and writer. Santino’s parents describe him as humble. Santino is known for saying, “Nobody is going to cradle you and carry you up [a flight of] stairs. You need to express initiative and earn a position each step along the way.” Santino will be attending Berkley High School as part of the Berkley Scholars Program.

KATELYN HOMES

This was Katelyn’s first year at Japhet. Katelyn’s teachers describe her

as confident, brave, hard-working, courageous, intelligent, outgoing, and as a talented actress. The character quality of justice is important to Katelyn; she talks about what is right and notices when someone is treated unfairly. Katelyn brings issues to the forefront. She believes we cannot ignore them; rather, we must address them. Her family shared they are grateful for what Japhet has done for Katelyn, and feel Katelyn has become a better person. Katelyn plans to attend Royal Oak High School in the fall.

LILY HONNER

Lily started attending Japhet as a 5th-grader. Lily is gracious, polite, industrious, humble, and self-motivated. She enjoys writing poetry, reading, and taking photography classes. Her teachers find her to be a quiet leader—one who leads by example. She does what needs to be done with reliability and calmness. Lily’s parents feel she is well positioned to enter high school both academically

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Giving Stories: What Inspires you to Give?

Donor spotlight on Sheila Chaps — volunteer, Hands of Hope member, and lifelong friend

Sheila has provided academic leadership for more than four decades. She holds advanced education degrees, served Japhet for 18 years as a teacher and principal, served as Head of School at Daycroft Montessori, and most recently held the Lower School Head position at University Liggett. After retiring from Liggett she returned to Japhet as a board trustee, and she now serves as vice president.

Why did you return to the Japhet School board after retiring?

It had always been my hope to return to what I see as 'the gold standard' of excellence in education, and as a retiree I have more time to share in Japhet's growth and purpose.

You have witnessed some important transitions for Japhet School. What are your observations of change here?

Japhet's ownership of its own building is a major move forward. I see the strong integration of technology; this progress is significant. Instruction takes place well beyond the standing walls, with online exchanges with resources and experts all over the world. I also see added support services that enable us to provide diverse learning strategies to a wide range of students.

You and your husband, Pat, are Hands of Hope (\$1,000 annually or more) donors. Why do you and Pat choose to give at this level?

From experience I know the gifts of time, talent, and treasure are essential in support of school communities. All education is subsidized, and for independent schools, this support comes from individual donors. My husband and I care deeply to promote the sustainability and progress of the 'Japhet ideal' in education.

You help lead Play & Learn. Why do you think this is an important program for Japhet?

The toddler program gives families a window to the way Japhet's expert teachers set a stage for a young child's discovery. Families feel the quality of care and instruction and might choose to enroll in preschool. With a lifetime of teaching little ones, it was my hope I could provide help to Play & Learn.



Sheila and Pat Chaps, Hands of Hope donors and dear Japhet friends

What do you envision as growth for Japhet School?

More students should benefit from a Japhet education, and we can accomplish this with a wider broadcast of Japhet's story by the whole community. Japhet can take a larger leadership role among other schools in character education. I'd also like to see better compensation for Japhet's capable, expert, dedicated, and deserving teachers.

What character quality speaks to you the most, and why?

Circumstances dictate which character quality speaks most loudly at various times. All are most important. I feel today that 'courage' stands out: to try something new in learning, to take risks in effort, to trust ability in self and others, and to stand for what one knows is right.

What most impresses you about Japhet's program and students?

The ethos of the school. It is elevating to observe children apply their talents and education to their endeavors, to see them acquire skills and confidence in their intellect, and to be a part of such a nurturing atmosphere of care and respect. I see the solid integration of character, demonstrated in all aspects of curriculum and school life, and I witness the relationship of trust and joy between teachers and students. When I'm at Japhet I can feel the earnestness of the students' desires to make a difference wherever they are. The future holds promise with Japhet graduates at work in the world.

CUT AND RETURN TO: JAPHET SCHOOL, 839 S. CROOKS RD., CLAWSON, MI 48017



The JAPHET SCHOOL Annual Giving Fund

Please accept my gift of \$ _____ to the **Annual Giving Fund**

Please accept my gift of \$ _____ to the capital campaign

TOTAL: \$ _____ amount enclosed, OR

divide into _____ monthly payments of \$ _____

I'll give by: Check Visa AmEx Mastercard

_____ card #
_____ expiration _____ security code _____ signature

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

My employer will match my gift. (Please obtain a form from your HR office and include it with your contribution.)

Please do not publish my name as a donor.

Donations to the Annual Fund are most needed.

Our mortgage has been paid in full, and donations to the capital campaign —still very much appreciated — will go toward our remaining bridge loan.

Donations of all sizes are helpful. Japhet School is a 501(c)(3) organization, and your gift is tax-deductible. Thank you!

Alumni News

High School Graduations to Celebrate

Lily Danaher XJ'14 Berkley High School—(Summa Cum Laude, NHS, Diversity Council, Generation of Promise—social justice organization for which Lily is helping build an alumni program). Grand Valley State University.



Katya Kornievskaja J'14 Marian High School, (National Merit Scholar Commended student, Math Medal of Honor, Certificate of Honor—Science, Archdiocese of Detroit All Catholic Academic Team, High Honors Achievement Award, President's Award of Educational Excellence). University of Michigan Honors College, Pre-Med. Katya has been selected to participate in the Undergraduate Research Program. She and her family spent most of the summer visiting family and friends in Russia.

Tessa Kaminski XJ'14 Troy High School, (Magna Cum Laude, Squad Leader—4 year Marching Band, founded ASL club). Kent State University, ASL Interpretation with a Psychology minor. Tessa chose this field of study after being inspired by learning some sign language with Janet Andersen in Primary Class.



Alec Minchington XJ'14 Athens High School, (Summa Cum Laude, Japanese Language Award, lead programmer for Athens Robotics Team—Troy Hammerheads, black belt in Tang Soo

Do). University of Michigan, College of Engineering with a Regents Scholarship for Computer Science with a focus on robotics.

College Graduations to Celebrate

Reilly Ankers J'10 University of Michigan, BS Psychology (Boxing team—4 years, USA boxing federation accredited coach, 2017 Nat'l Champion—165 lb. weight class). Reilly is currently enrolled in an EMT course and is scribing for Oakstreet Health in Detroit where he also coaches boxing for Downtown Youth Boxing Program. He plans to work as an EMT in Detroit while he applies to medical schools.

Caris Bing J'10 Loyola University, Chicago, dual major (Summa Cum Laude) BA in International Studies, minor in International Business and BA in Spanish, minor in Sociology. She is working for Altria and currently lives in the Minneapolis area. Caris continues to be involved in Management Leadership for Tomorrow, a non-profit which equips and emboldens high-achieving women



A beautiful fall sunrise captured by Japhet alumna Corey Robinson J'04 while she worked as a student photographer for the NMU marketing department.

and men from underrepresented communities to make a mark and make a difference.



Corey Robinson J'04 Northern Michigan University, BS Earth Science minor in Environmental Studies (Summa Cum Laude). Corey worked for the marketing department of the university and her spectacular photographs were featured in much of their advertising. Corey is headed to Chatham University in Pittsburgh to earn her Master's Degree in Sustainability.



Alexa Fisher XJ'10 Brown University, BA in Business, Entrepreneurship and Organizations. Alexa earned a Dean's Award for exceptional contributions to the program as well as an internship in Madrid and a semester of study in Barcelona. Alexa was selected to participate in a summer program at Harvard Business School. While at Brown, she served as Chapter President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, an historically black sorority focused on sisterhood, scholarship and service. Alexa is currently living in NYC and working for Jet.com/Walmart as an e-commerce specialist handling marketing, pricing, distribution, and sales.

Olivia Wood XJ'10 University of Michigan, dual major BA (with distinction) in International Studies—Global Health and Spanish with a concentration in Pre-Med. She received a Spanish Excellence Award from the University. Olivia will be moving to New York City this summer as she has enrolled at Columbia University to obtain a Master's Degree in Public Health.

Preschoolers in Training



Steven Andersen XJ'98 and Amanda Sagert welcome their second son Ryder born in May. Five weeks premature, he weighed in at 4 lbs. 10 oz. and spent his first two weeks

in the NICU growing and getting stronger. He is now at home with big brother Brody who adores his new playmate-to-be. Primary Class teacher and grandma Janet Andersen and the Japhet family are all grateful for his progress and health.



Klinton Vizena XJ'02 and Sarah Murphy welcome their first child, son Kole born in August. Kole arrived and shortly greeted his many visitors with eyes wide open! Kole is the sixth grandchild of Head of School Kerri Vizena.

Weddings to Celebrate



Will Butler XJ'02 and Anna Peters were married in a beautiful ceremony in downtown Detroit in August 2017. Will and Anna, who became a couple in 8th grade, have purchased a home in Huntington Woods, but love the



downtown vibe as Anna works with Quicken Loans and Will with the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Hannah J'07 (Hilzinger) and Shea Vice married on July 15 at picturesque Indian Springs Metropark. They met in college and after the wedding enjoyed a beautiful honeymoon in Bermuda. Hannah and Shea have just moved to the Denver, Colo., area and are planning to work for the parks department in that area. They look forward to exploring the mountains and spending time outdoors.

Do you have alumni news to share?
Please send news and photos to
Robin Pospisil, Admissions Director
at robin.pospisil@japhetschool.org.



JAPHET SCHOOL

839 S. CROOKS RD., CLAWSON, MI 48017

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 624
ROYAL OAK, MI

REACHING OUT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Growing our summer offerings is a strong possibility for 2019 and beyond. It also provided an opportunity for families to experience our program before considering enrollment.

Play & Learn Toddler Program

We launched a toddler program in January 2017 to welcome parents with little ones to Japhet! Called Play & Learn, the program engages toddlers (18 months to 3 years) in an hour of enriching play with mom, dad, or other special adult. The program is once weekly, and each session is four weeks long. We've hosted Play & Learn for three sessions already. Fall 2018 and Winter 2019 are on the calendar, and themes include Music, Movement, Tactile & Sensory, Jungle, Stories & Puppets, Forest, Ocean, and Farm. Our Preschool and Kindergarten teachers help run the program along with Japhet staff and volunteers. It's been a wonderful way to introduce Japhet to families early and help toddlers discover that learning is fun!

Character Quality Icons

Japhet's Enrollment Team—a group of parents, teachers, staff, and trustee volunteers—is very excited to reveal the outcome of a creative endeavor reflecting months of brainstorming, design, and student involvement: character quality icons. Each of our 18 character qualities will soon be expressed visually! The icons are simple and will be used in myriad applications to promote character education and the Japhet brand. Plus, they're just plain FUN. Buttons top the list of ways the icons will be shared. Stay tuned to learn about how you can get your own button or a full set!

All of this work helps Japhet School grow, and much of it was driven by our current strategic plan. Japhet School has evolved, and newcomers who visit Japhet begin by saying they've already heard great news of the school, and are here to learn more. We receive most students via personal referral from parents, Japhet community members, and even teachers from other schools. Our reputation as a school of character, and as a school that sees the unique and unlimited learner in every child, is propelling our growth forward.

OUR FANTASTIC 45TH CLASS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

and socially. She uses her strong character to build lasting friendships. Lily will be attending Berkley High School as part of the Berkley Scholars Program.

ANNABELLE SITAREK

Annabelle came to Japhet as a Preschool student. Annabelle is inquisitive, optimistic, and caring. She enjoys biking, drawing, crafting, reading, playing the harp and ukulele, and listening to music. Annabelle volunteers at Gilda's Club and is well known for her volunteerism at school, always working weekend events. Annabelle's teachers describe her as dependable, patient, resourceful, and quick-witted. Annabelle's family feels she sees the best in people and makes those around her comfortable and happy. Annabelle will be attending Berkley High School.

GRACE WASILUK

Grace joined Japhet as a Kindergartener. She radiates kindness through her smile and gentle manner as an empathetic, creative, appreciative, and independent person. She enjoys playing soccer and trying her hand at interior design. She also loves animals and has many pets. Teachers feel Grace always gives her best effort. She is a role model who expresses all of Japhet's character qualities. Grace's parents appreciate all the speaking opportunities she has had; she can speak without getting nervous. Grace plans to attend Stoney Creek High School in Rochester Hills.

"We have quite a bit in common. Just as you are embarking on a new journey and experience, so am I as Japhet's next Head of School," said Kerri Vizona in her Graduation remarks. "I'll be taking those new steps of adventure right along with you. Let's be inspired, passionate, and dedicated to our journey ahead."

CONTACTING THE MOHANS

Cathy and Joe Mohan, enjoying retired life on their farm, wish to stay connected and welcome your letters, emails, and phone calls. Here's their information:

Cathy: 248-961-2296
farmercathymohan@gmail.com
Joe: 248-961-2295
farmerjoemohan@gmail.com

Cathy and Joe Mohan
4319 Kilgore Road,
Avoca, MI 48006