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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Japhet School Students Adopt a Family in Need for the Holidays

Dec. 16, 2009 – Madison Heights, MI – Japhet School, the award-winning private school in Madison Heights, Michigan, is reaching the culmination of a month-long service activity to provide a happier holiday to a family in need. On Friday, December 18, two of its teachers will deliver two vehicles full of new coats, bedding, boots, board games and much more to a family who needs a helping hand this holiday season. (Editor’s note: Japhet is pronounced “jay-fit.”)

Given the unemployment level in Greater Detroit combined with a year-long community service theme of “Neighborhood,” Japhet’s staff and students decided to find and “adopt” a Metro Detroit family that needed help. With the assistance of a parent who aids families in need with infant children, the school was connected with a family in Warren that needed winter coats and car seats as a top priority. The family has four children ranging in age from 10 months to nine years.

“Our students learned that the children were facing winter without adequate coats or boots, and they were inspired to fill these needs,” says Betsy Stecker, communications director at Japhet, who coordinated the activity. “The stage in our gym is now filled with donated clothes and household items from our Japhet families, much of which were hand-chosen by our students.”

Each Japhet classroom – there are six in all – took on a particular need, such as pillows and sheets, or coats and boots. In this way, all the family’s stated needs were met. And during this final week, the school invited its families to participate in “Family Service Night,” a time when they can return to school for a student-prepared fundraising dinner and the opportunity to gift wrap some of the donated items.

Japhet School is governed by a teaching philosophy of 10 points, one of which states, “with the gift of knowledge and understanding of moral and spiritual values comes an obligation to help mankind.”

To put this in action, the school not only engages in all-school service, but gives students opportunities to discover the joy of giving and serving. For instance, the school’s Primary Class of first- and second-graders collected monetary donations instead of specific items like clothes, and then went shopping for the family as a class field trip.

“The students raised more than enough money to fulfill the needs, so the students were given the charge to also buy a present for each of the children,” says Primary Class teacher Janet Andersen. “It was a special moment when they brought these presents to me, explaining why they chose them with such joy and a true love of giving.” This same class of students last year hosted a pre-owned book sale and used the proceeds to donate a beekeeping setup to an impoverished community through Heifer International.

Founded in 1973, Japhet was the first school in Michigan to win a “National School of Character” award which was presented in 2001 by the Character Education Partnership in Washington, DC. Since then, its integrated character curriculum has been used as a model by other Michigan schools for their programs including Birmingham Public Schools. Japhet is fully accredited by the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS).

Parents say that among the top reasons they selected – and have chosen to remain – at Japhet School is for its strong character program and the sense of community fostered among parents, students, teachers and staff.

For more information about Japhet School, visit www.japhetschool.org and click on Admissions. The school is centrally located in Metro Detroit, near 13 Mile Road and I-75.

About Japhet:

Founded in 1973, Japhet School is an independent school, serving children the metropolitan Detroit area in preschool through eighth grade. Its mission is to nurture and prepare children for life by integrating character education with a strong academic program. The school provides small classes, which are purposefully designed as “blends” or two-grade classrooms. This setup enables teachers to challenge students with academic material that is appropriate for their intellectual readiness, regardless of age or grade. Integrated with strong academics is Japhet School’s national award-winning character education curriculum, which not only builds a peaceful community within the school, but also gives Japhet students a foundation of character on which they will rely their entire lives. Japhet is a National School of Character, and was the first school in Michigan -- and the first independent school in the country -- to receive this award.

About the National Schools of Character Award

The annual National Schools of Character Award is presented to K-12 schools that demonstrate exemplary programs that encourage the social and ethical development of their students. It was developed to recognize outstanding character education initiatives that yield positive results in student behavior, school climate and academic performance. The Award is sponsored and administered by the Character Education Partnership (CEP) in Washington, D.C.

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