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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Promoting Children's Safety Online

Japhet School to Host Oct 8th Character Conference on "Digital Citizenship"

Sept 14, 2009 – Madison Heights, MI -- The growing concern for children's safety while surfing the Internet and what parents and teachers can do to help children make the right ethical choices online to avoid cyberbullying, plagiarism and piracy will be the focus on the 8th Annual Character Conference hosted by Japhet School, the award-winning private school in Madison Heights, Michigan. (Editor's note: Japhet is pronounced "JAY-fit.")

The conference is being promoted with the banner, "You Are What You Post! Building Digital Citizenship with Character." It is scheduled for Thursday, October 8, 2009 from 7 PM-9 PM and is free to all interested parents, educators and news media with advance registration. Child care will be provided at \$5.00.

Sara Wilkie and Vicki Pascaretti, learning facilitators in Birmingham Public Schools, are the keynote speakers at the conference. Wilkie and Pascaretti support teachers in their efforts to embrace the needs and challenge the thinking of 21st-century learners. They also co-wrote a book called *Super Smart Information Strategies: Team Up Online*, scheduled for release in 2010.

"One element of the conference will be to help parents better understand, discuss, and teach their children about the importance of positive interaction when working online," says Wilkie. "Children need to treat online relationships similar to face-to-face relationships, and have strategies for interacting with people safely, appropriately, and positively. When young people understand and embrace this, it naturally becomes a part of their 'digital character.'"

The conference will run two hours. Attendees can look forward to interactive activities and engaging dialogue. "Parents and teachers will learn how the daily mistakes and opportunities their children experience can become positive lessons," says Wilkie.

Japhet is recognized for its strong academics and was the first school in Michigan to be named a National School of Character. Its integrated character curriculum has been used as a model by other Michigan schools including Birmingham Public Schools. Since becoming a National School of Character in 2001, Japhet has hosted a character conference for parents and

teachers annually with a variety of specific topics. Wilkie also teaches at a National School of Character -- Covington School in Birmingham, and Pascaretti has taught at Beverly Elementary School, which won a "Promising Practice Award" from the same organization.

"At Japhet School, our approach to character education is proactive," says Catherine Mohan, head of school. "We give our students the tools to make positive choices that reflect who they really are, and their expression of good character is a natural result. We believe this is more effective than giving them a long list of 'do not's, and our speakers share that philosophy."

For more information about Japhet School and the October 8th character conference, visit www.japhetschool.org and click on Character. The school is centrally located in Madison Heights, 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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