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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Leadership Development

Japhet School Students Place in Optimist Oratorical Contest

Madison Heights, MI -- Japhet School, the award-winning independent school in Madison Heights, Michigan, announced that two seventh-grade and two eighth-grade students were awarded for their speech deliveries in the Optimist Oratorical Contest. The contest was sponsored by the Lakeshore Optimists Club in Grosse Pointe Farms and took place on March 15, 2012. This is the third year that Japhet School has participated in the contest.

This year's topic was "How Optimism Helps Me Overcome My Obstacles." Contenders each presented a speech reflecting the challenges of their own lives. Japhet speakers included William Vede-Aldridge (Madison Heights), eighth-grade student, who took first place for the boys' competition. Seth Atisha (Lathrup Village), in seventh grade, took second, and Aidan Grejda (Rochester), eighth-grade student, took third place. Mallory Demeter (Pleasant Ridge), in seventh grade, placed third among all girls. Six Japhet School students competed: the four above and eighth-graders Caleigh White (Royal Oak) and Jordan Ross (Bloomfield Hills).

"We are proud of every student who participates in this contest," says Head of School Cathy Mohan, "They all spoke with poise and courage, sharing personal experiences that have been difficult for them. The Optimist Creed is in harmony with qualities like respect for self and gratitude, which we teach all our students. It is an honor to be invited to participate."

Japhet School's oral presentation curriculum is a hallmark of the school. Beginning at age 6, every Japhet School student gives an oral report to the entire school body each year about a person of good character or worthy non-profit to support. In addition, the school hosts several special academic events that require students to prepare oral reports. Oral presentation assignments are even integrated into special classes such as technology and music. By the time students reach eighth grade, they are prepared to fulfill a graduation requirement: deliver a 25-minute keynote to the whole student body about the monthly character quality.

SEE PHOTO, NEXT PAGE and ATTACHED ELECTRONICALLY to this release



Japhet School students, left to right:

- Seth Atisha of Lathrup Village, seventh grade (2nd place, boys)
- Aidan Grejda of Rochester, eighth grade (3rd place, boys)
- William Vede-Aldridge of Madison Heights, eighth grade (1st place, boys)
- Mallory Demeter of Pleasant Ridge, seventh grade (3rd place, girls)

About Japhet School:

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 each child for life by integrating character education with a strong academic program. The school provides small classes of fewer than 20 students in each, which 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 builds a peaceful community within the school and creates leaders with integrity. Japhet is a National School of Character: it was the first school in Michigan -- and the first independent school in the country -- to receive this award. To learn more about Japhet, visit www.japhetschool.org.

About Optimist International:

Optimist International is one of the world's largest service club organizations with more than 100,000 adult and youth members in clubs in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean and Mexico and throughout the world. The Optimist Oratorical Contest is one of the organization's most popular programs. Carrying the motto "Bringing Out the Best in Kids," Optimists conduct positive service projects that reach more than six million young people each year. To learn more about Optimist International, visit www.optimist.org.

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