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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Environmental Education

Rouge Rescue! Best-practice academics in science education at Japhet School

May 5, 2010: Fifth- through eighth-grade students were a part of an area-wide effort today to improve the health of the Rouge River watershed. With thorough science class preparation, practice lab work, and hands-on water testing in the field, Japhet School's middle school students experienced best-practice science learning.

"The ultimate goal was to understand the concept of watersheds globally and their significance to the health of all living things," says Japhet's Intermediate Class teacher and middle school science teacher Brenda Gaunt. "We are doing our part to understand our impact on the watershed with authentic lab work on-site. It's global stewardship and scientific exploration, combined."

Once in the field at a Rouge River watershed area in Farmington Hills, students conducted several types of tests. They did biological testing to examine the macroinvertebrate population; chemical testing to determine pH levels, oxygen levels, and bacteria levels; and physical testing to determine the velocity of the Rouge current, the condition of the riverbanks, and the amount of physical pollution. Japhet students' findings were added to an area-wide report that included collected data from other public and private schools in Metro Detroit.

"There was the all-important character component, as well," says Mrs. Gaunt. "Our students took their responsibilities seriously and used industry in completing their tasks. They worked peacefully in cooperative groups to gather all the information they needed. Students expressed obedience when in the field - not only for their safety, but also to ensure quality test results."

The Rouge Rescue project was made possible by a \$1,000 grant from the Global Rivers Environmental Education Network (GREEN) and General Motors, which was used to purchase necessary supplies like testing materials and chemicals, students' preparation packets, protective equipment, and more. "We've expressed our gratitude to GM, and students wrote thank-you cards to all 11 volunteers who assisted on our field trip day." Mrs. Gaunt hopes to repeat the Rouge watershed unit each year with continued financial support.

[photograph on next page]

About Japhet School:

Japhet School is an independent school, serving children in the Detroit area in preschool through eighth grade. It provides a low student-to-teacher ratio in a peaceful setting, which means greater individual support and opportunity to excel. Integrated with academics is a nationally recognized, award-winning character education curriculum, designed to give students a foundation of character and integrity. Japhet School is a National School of Character. Parents say that among the top reasons they enroll their children in Japhet School is for its strong character program and the sense of community fostered among parents, students, teachers and staff. The school is centrally located in Metro Detroit, near 13 Mile Road and I-75.

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Three middle-school boys work together to conduct water-quality tests at a Rouge River watershed location.