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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Leadership Development

### **Japhet School Students Land Top Places in Optimist Oratorical Contest**

March 29, 2010 - Madison Heights, MI -- Japhet School, the award-winning private school in Madison Heights, Michigan, announced that three of its seventh- and eighth-grade students took first place and two second-place spots in the Optimist Oratorical Contest. The contest was sponsored by the Lakeshore Optimists Club in Grosse Pointe Farms and took place on March 25, 2010. This is the first year that Japhet School has participated in the contest.

Japhet School's winning speakers: Caris Bing, eighth-grade student, took second place for the girls' competition. Reilly Ankers, eighth-grade student, took second place for the boys' competition, and RaShaun Hayes, in seventh grade, took first place among all boys.

This year's topic was "Cyber Communication: Progress or Problem?" Contenders each presented a position speech about the pros and cons of cyber communication, reflecting on how it affects their lives today and in the future. Japhet School global studies teacher and oratorical coach Susan Butler, who led all her seventh- and eighth-grade students through the speechwriting activity as a school assignment, says she is proud of every Japhet student who elected to participate in the contest. "They all were poised and spoke with confidence," she says. Five Japhet School students competed, and the three named above took top places.

"Although people become obsessed in the world of technology," posited Reilly Ankers on behalf of cyber communication, "this is not technology's problem."

Caris Bing took the opposite side. "Where is our nation headed," she asked, "if our next generation is incapable of holding a face-to-face conversation?"

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 every year about a person of good character. 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 about the monthly character quality that the school is studying.

“People use cyber communication as a way to communicate with others around the world,” stated first-place winner RaShaun Hayes, “but in the U.S., people are not developing correct speaking skills.” Not so for this seventh-grader, who aptly proved his competence. RaShaun will move on to the next level of zone competition in Dearborn mid-April.

#### About Japhet School:

Japhet School is an independent school, serving children 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. To learn more about Japhet School, visit [www.japhetschool.org](http://www.japhetschool.org).

#### About Optimist International:

Optimist International is one of the world’s largest service club organizations with 107,000 adult and youth members in 3,400 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, with more than 2,000 clubs participating annually. 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](http://www.optimist.org).

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