



# JAPHET SCHOOL

Award-winning National School of Character

SUMMER 2011

Japhet School's mission is to nurture and prepare each child for life by integrating character education with a strong academic program.

## What does it mean to be a GREEN SCHOOL?

For the third year in a row, Japhet School has been recognized as a Michigan Green School through Oakland Schools, our county's intermediate school district.

To be a Michigan Green School, schools have to prove that green practices are in place throughout the school. A minimum of 10 practices are required for "Green," 15 for "Emerald," and to be a Michigan Evergreen School – which Japhet has been for two years – the school must employ at least 20 green practices.

A sample of Japhet's green activities:

- Environmental service learning. For the third year, our fifth- through eighth-graders participated in the Rouge Education Project, which engaged students in hands-on water testing and lab work. Many community schools were involved to improve the health of the Rouge River. This year, we collaborated with teams from a Detroit charter school.
- Paper, cardboard, plastic, and metal recycling – schoolwide.
- Toner, battery, and cell phone collection and recycling.
- Presentations to students by ecological spokespeople.
- Solar cooking. This year, Primary Class students made mango banana bread in the cooker, which integrated with their rainforest unit.
- Seed-planting activity for Earth Day.
- Using salvaged materials in art projects.

- Decorating a store's paper grocery bags, encouraging re-use.
- Encouraging waste-free lunches.
- Expanding our outdoor garden with plants native to Michigan.

"I have been inspired by our students and volunteers who took this to heart," says Pam Mazurkiewicz, our librarian and reading specialist who initiated the Recycling Committee at Japhet. "Our program has grown from a little bit of recycling to a whole-school effort. I hope all schools will go through this process, for the next generation of children."

### Upcoming Events:

Japhet Journey Tours  
July 14, 10 AM  
August 14, 1-3 PM

Open House  
August 14, 1-3 PM

FORE! the Kids Golf Outing  
at Red Run Golf Club  
August 29, 8:30 AM Shotgun Start

First Day of School  
September 7

### Feedback, please

Our new database is up and running! Please send address corrections to Betsy Stecker, Communications Director, at [betsy.stecker@japhetschool.org](mailto:betsy.stecker@japhetschool.org) or 248 585-9150. Thank you for your support.



This Upper Class student and his Preschool buddy plant a vegetable seed as part of Japhet's Earth Day celebration.

# continual growth & progress

Benjamin Franklin said, "Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning." It takes courage to grow, especially when growth brings change.

Re-enrollment from our families has been strong, and interest from new families has given us an opportunity to expand! Japhet faculty and staff have worked with me to determine the best path for growth. As much of this expected growth is occurring in the early grades, we are dividing Primary Class into First Grade and Second Grade. Janet Andersen will teach First Grade, and Lauren Jones has been hired to teach Second Grade. Mrs. Jones's natural joy of teaching was evident when she guest-taught for Primary Class. I am excited to have her join Japhet's faculty.

As another step in our expansion we are moving classrooms. Upper Class (7th/8th) is moving to the MPR. Mrs. Butler, our Upper Class teacher, has a wonderful vision for this space and is enthusiastically creating the new UC environment. Middle Class (3rd/4th) and Intermediate Class (5th/6th) will both move up one room and Second Grade will move in next to Primary. The Art Room will become the Specialists' Room and will host both Art and Music classes as well as Spanish.

Throughout the spring, the faculty, staff, and I have given a thoughtful critique of the school calendar. With input from parents, students, and alumni we have decided to alternate Social Studies Fair and Science Fair. We will have one fair per year instead of two, allowing more time for core academics. Please mark your calendars and join us on March 2, 2012, for Invention Fair!

Miss Ebony Stokes, our Spanish, Music, and Technology teacher, is moving out of the state this summer. How wonderful it has been for the past three years to have a teacher who could take on so many roles here at Japhet and do so with such style. We will miss her many talents! A search is currently underway for a Spanish teacher, Music teacher, and Technology teacher.

In May we completed our Fourth Annual Strategic Planning Meeting. Our objectives to increase student enrollment, build our endowment, and update our curriculum to align with new standards and best practices are all well on their way to completion. Strategic Plans help organizations improve and grow, and we are seeing the positive consequences of continued growth!

We have a busy summer ahead of us full of adventure, growth and progress.

Cathy Mohan  
cathy.mohan@japhetschool.org



## MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL



### Cameron's Crusade

A heartfelt thanks for supporting our Cameron's Crusade service project to benefit Cameron Wasiluk, a special-needs child and son of a Japhet teacher. Over \$6,500 raised will provide a gait trainer, wheelchair lift, and a swing. "We are immensely grateful to everyone who took part in Cameron's Crusade and helped to get the equipment needed to improve his quality of life," says Julia Wasiluk, Cameron's mother and Japhet math teacher. "The gait trainer has arrived, and Cameron will be spending lots of time safely on his feet. The most touching thing has been seeing how the students care for Cameron. They greet him, touch his hand, and encourage him. We have felt an outpouring of love and support from the entire Japhet community, and we can't thank you enough."



Our FORE! the Kids Golf Outing is on Monday, August 29. We are looking forward to returning to the prestigious Red Run Golf Club in Royal Oak. Join us!

Admission of \$175 per golfer includes:

- Driving range, breakfast and shotgun start at 8:30 AM
- 18-hole scramble at Red Run (host of the second-oldest Invitational in Michigan and three PGA tournaments)
- Luncheon and silent auction
- Plus, a lunch-only option for non-golfing guests for \$40

Hole sponsorships are available. To inquire, contact our Development Director, Cheryl Haithco, at Japhet School.

To join in, please register using the FORE! the Kids link on our web site.

Attention, alumni: Please join this event for a reduced rate of \$120! To take advantage of this special alumni rate please contact Cheryl Haithco (registrations for the reduced rate cannot be made online). Hope to see you there!

# The Japhet Legacy

Our 2011 graduating class was celebrated in rich Japhet tradition: sincere and joyous speakers, song, gifts, a glance at each student's life through pictures, and a personal tribute from the Head of School to each individual boy and girl upon receiving a Japhet diploma.

Andy Rathburg, our keynote speaker, connected their upcoming high school lives to their experiences at the Leelanau Outdoor Center. A LOC counselor, "The Burg" got to know each of the graduates in northern Michigan.



Our class of 2011: Crystal Hayes, RaShaun Hayes, David Stecker, Chase Dobbs, and Gillian Demeter.

"Do your best, be considerate, and have fun," he said. "These are the rules to live by."

"It is believed there is strength in numbers," said Caris Bing, J'10, who was our alumna speaker for Graduation. Caris spoke to how her Japhet education was an asset during her freshman year at Marian High School. "Our numbers may not be many, but we are leaving footprints for others. We are the future. We carry the Japhet legacy."

## "We are the future."

We wish these students a wonderful high school experience. Cathy Mohan delivered these individual remarks – shared only in part, here – which were collected from teachers, parents, and fellow students.

**Crystal Hayes** enjoys art, cooking, and playing soccer. She has a special talent in the kitchen, and not just cooking a meal, but coordinating a school Hot Lunch. Her favorite subjects are math and writing. Her hobbies also include playing golf, and she has received a silver medal award for her involvement with Girls Golf USA. Crystal is a youth leader in her church's music department, and she serves as a childcare assistant in the family's daycare business. Her classmates and teachers describe her as happy, honest, humble, and a team player. Mrs. Butler commends Crystal for developing her talent as a writer this year. Crystal plans to attend Farmington Harrison High School in the fall and is interested in culinary arts from Mrs. Pospisil's cooking influence.

**RaShaun Hayes** has a mature and happy demeanor about him and an intrinsic desire to be helpful. According to Mrs. Butler, RaShaun has "an x-factor, that special something that draws you in – a natural gift of speaking out to us and making us want to listen." This could be why he has done so well at the Optimist Club Oratorical Contests, taking 1st and 2nd place in the last two years' district contests, and why he is so charismatic on stage. RaShaun enjoys listening to pop and reggae music, singing, and playing football. RaShaun's classmates and teachers describe him as optimistic, funny, industrious, and compassionate. RaShaun plans to attend Shrine High School in Royal Oak.

**Chase Dobbs** began attending Japhet as a Primary Class student. Mrs. Andersen describes him as a tender-hearted little boy who loved animals. His mom is grateful that Chase has so many memories of "being teacher, being taught, and learning together at all levels of relationship." Chase is described as mature, thoughtful, peaceful, and kind to the core. Mrs. Butler says, "Chase has the skill set to do most anything he would like to do. Dr. Chase Dobbs? Perhaps, but it could just as well be Justice Dobbs, Professor Dobbs or business owner and entrepreneur Chase Dobbs." Chase still loves animals and hopes to pursue science. Chase plans to attend U of D Jesuit High School.

**David Stecker** is a friend to all. David finds a way to weave his natural interests into his academics, whether he's testing "Arrows of Fire" or the best way to string a lacrosse stick. He enjoys working with tools, engineering things by hand, and experimenting with spring contraptions and projectiles. Mrs. Butler describes him as "a thinker, the master of the 'what if' with a curious, creative mind. David, like the invention he will one day come up with, is an original." His classmates say he is athletic and creative. In high school he is looking forward to CAD drafting, metal shop classes, and physics. David plans to attend Royal Oak High School, where he hopes to play JV lacrosse and join the theater construction crew.

**Gillian Demeter** has been a Japhet student since she was 12 weeks old! There are so many memories for her family, but the common denominator is Gillian with a big smile on her face and the faculty surrounding her with love. Gillian approaches everything she does with a can-do attitude of industry. She has struck the heart of each person who has taught her because she simply *never gives up*. Gillian's classmates describe her as enthusiastic, considerate, intelligent, and focused. Mrs. Gaunt commends Gillian for being a role model – not only for her peers but also for the adults in her life. Mrs. Butler says she has reveled in Gillian's joy this year. In the words of her family, "Gillian is a wonderful daughter, sister, and friend." Gillian plans to attend Eton Academy in Birmingham.

# Board of Trustees Welcomes New Faces

Japhet School's Board of Trustees welcomed Kent Commer and Libby Palackdharry, who have been elected to serve.

Kent Commer heads Essex Financial Group, which focuses on personal financial, investment, insurance, and estate planning requirements. His four children all attended Japhet School, and he has previously served on Japhet's Board and on our Development Committee.

Libby Palackdharry (née Samanen) graduated in Japhet's class of 1997. Today she works for Southwest Solutions in southwest Detroit as the Center for Working Families coordinator.

Julie Knaffla will continue as president, Cassaundra Bing as vice-president, Jay Schmitt as treasurer, and Ann Nicholson as secretary. Judy Gettel, Susie Golbiw, Mike Hedge, Terry Helgesen, Jack McNaughton, and Natalie Wright complete the board. A brief biography of each trustee is on our web site.

Pat Tibbetts – former trustee, Head of School, Japhet art and history teacher, and alumni parent – is concluding her service to Japhet. We are grateful for her 26-year commitment to the school and to the character education movement at large. She spearheaded the State Schools of Character program in Michigan, and today there are 13 Michigan schools that are either State or National Schools of Character. "I have found the years working for Japhet among the most professionally rewarding and personally enjoyable," says Tibbetts. "Japhet's idea of education is spot on. The school's integration of character with academics is an important example to the field of education."

## Alumni News

### High School Graduations to Celebrate and College Plans

**Zak Bratto, J'07** - Arts Academy in the Woods, Oakland Community College

**Grant Demeter, J'07** - University of Detroit Jesuit High School (Honors), University of Michigan

**Hannah Hilzinger, J'07** - Royal Oak High School (NHS, Noesis Creative Arts Award, Cum Laude), Principia College

**Mariyah Jackson, J'07** - Birmingham Wylie Groves High School

**Austin Nothdurft, J'07**- Oakland Early College (Honors; Presidential, Michigan, and Oakland County service awards), Michigan Technological University

**Katy Robinson, J'07**- Redford Union High School (Honors), Schoolcraft College

**Clint White, J'07** - Royal Oak High School, Principia College

### College Graduations to Celebrate and Employment

**Will Hilzinger, J'03** - University of Michigan (Engineering, Cum Laude, Dean's List), National Instruments, Austin, Texas

**Jake Mohan, J'03** - Michigan Tech (Engineering, Magna Cum Laude, Dean's List), Camp Leelanau

**Charlie O'Ryan, J'03** - Western Michigan University (Logistics), SMS Consulting, Auburn Hills, Mich.

**David Blake, XJ'03** - Albion College (Honors Econ./Management), London study abroad, Hudsonville Ice Cream internship

**Kristen Rosen, XJ'03** - Principia College (Sociology/Anthropology), Internship in Post-Graduate Studies at Principia



These alumni joined us on Graduation day to send off the class of 2011 with their support and joy.

Do you have alumni news to share? Please send news and photos to Robin Pospisil, Admissions Director, at [robin.pospisil@japhetschool.org](mailto:robin.pospisil@japhetschool.org).



**JAPHET SCHOOL**

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