



# Japhet School

31201 Dorchester • Madison Heights, MI 48071 • 248/585-9150 • [www.japhetschool.org](http://www.japhetschool.org)

## Summer 2009

### The Mission of Japhet School



*Japhet School nurtures and prepares each child for life by integrating character education with a strong academic program.*

### Upcoming Events:

- August 23: Open House
- September 9: First Day of School
- September 21: Fore! the Kids Golf Outing
- October 11: Open House
- November 5: 18 Reasons for Hope Luncheon
- November 13: Social Studies Fair

## Message from the Head of School



In 1973 Mary Baker Eddy's definition of Japhet inspired the name for a new elementary school in the Detroit area. This definition reads:

*"Japhet (Noah's son). A type of spiritual peace, flowing from the understanding that God is the divine Principle of all existence, and that man is His idea, the child of His care."*

Japhet School was founded 35 years ago by six individuals who were parents and educators, and who wanted to see values included in education. Japhet began with 27 students, and the six founders became our first trustees.

Today Japhet is an independent school, accredited by ISACS, the Independent School Association of the Central States. Japhet is also an award-winning National School of Character, and a certified Michigan Green School.

Japhet's mission is to "nurture and prepare each child for life by integrating character education with a strong academic program." In today's challenging economy families are reassessing their priorities and choices. In conversations with parents, I am often told that the one investment they will continue to make is the investment in their children and their future. Japhet School provides a strong educational foundation for high school, college, and life as confirmed by alumni testimonials.

During our Graduation Ceremony we celebrated the accomplishments of our 8th grade graduate, Amelia Stecker, as well as an exciting year of growth for all students. Highlights of the 2008/2009 school year include special annual events like Social Studies Fair and Science Fair, Family Math Night, meeting Ja Namprachan – a visiting student from Thailand who joined Intermediate Class for a month, Spring Sharing – "Bright Lights on Broadway," exploration of the Clinton River watershed, and class parties that included 1950s party and a sleepover at school. It has been a memorable year!

You can help us celebrate by viewing recent photos of the year on our brand-new web site! Check out our new look at [www.japhetschool.org](http://www.japhetschool.org). We expect that this new site, described in more detail below, along with energized marketing initiatives will bring new families to our next Open House: **Sunday, August 23, from 1:00 - 3:00 PM**. However, individual tours are available throughout the summer. If you'd like to visit, or introduce a friend to Japhet, just give us a call.

**Cathy Mohan**  
Head of School

## Check out our new look at [www.japhetschool.org](http://www.japhetschool.org)!

Japhet's new and improved website is up and running! Located at [www.japhetschool.org](http://www.japhetschool.org), it features fresh faces and artwork, quotes from students, parents and alumni, information that is easier to navigate, an updated calendar and event reminder, and great ways to connect with the Japhet community. Visit us soon and check back often as we continue to build and expand the site over the course of the summer and fall.

*Japhet's Marketing, Diversity, and Admissions Committee – a dedicated group of staff, trustees, and parents – focused their 2009 efforts on creating a new web page with help from the company Creative Solutions.*



## GJS Supports Japhet's Mission

Grandparents especially enjoyed this year's Hot Lunch events, because not only could they have lunch on a schoolday with their grandchildren, but they also enjoyed the camaraderie of being with other grandparents to further the mission of Japhet School. They are the GJS – Grandparents of Japhet School!

The GJS meets monthly after each Hot Lunch. They discuss ways they can positively impact the school community. In the 2008/2009 school year, they added to Japhet's art and music curriculums. The "How Artists See" book series is comprised of 12 volumes featuring subjects that easily integrate into Japhet's curriculum; the books visually demonstrate how artists portray people, America, the weather, and more. Students in music class have already enjoyed newly purchased drum machines, and Spring Sharing was supported with karaoke and sheet music. The GJS also made a financial donation for the express purpose of adding to the school's DVD collection.

The GJS's current focus – which combines financial support and the gift of their talents – is to provide thematic gift baskets to be auctioned off at the September 21 Golf Outing.

All current and former grandparents are invited to be a part of the GJS. If you're interested but not able to attend meetings, you can still make a positive impact; it's as simple as paying dues – just \$25 annually. For more information, contact Carole Hilzinger at hilzinger311@aol.com.

## FORE! the Kids

Enjoy an excellent round of golf to benefit our students! Japhet School's annual fall golf outing will be:

**Monday, September 21, 2009**  
**Red Run Golf Club, Royal Oak, Michigan**

Registration begins at 7:00 AM  
 Tee-off with shotgun start at 8:30 AM

Lunch will begin as golfers return from course – approximately 12:30-1:00 PM

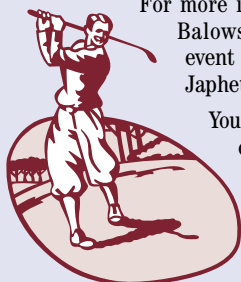
Breakfast, lunch, contests, prizes, and an auction are all included

Cost: **\$130.00** per golfer / **\$40.00** for each additional guest for lunch

**Red Run Golf Club** is a first-class course – an excellent venue for this year's outing.

For more information, contact Ted Balowski, Japhet trustee and event chair, at 248-376-9040, or Japhet's front office.

You can also register online at: [www.golfdigestplanner.com/7927-ForeTheKids2009/index.html](http://www.golfdigestplanner.com/7927-ForeTheKids2009/index.html).



## Amelia Stecker – Onward with Joy

On June 5, the Japhet community sent graduate Amelia Stecker on to her next educational experience with a heartfelt graduation ceremony. Amelia was our single graduate for 2009.

"Amelia fills a room with boundless energy – a zeal that is always the truest expression of her being," Head of School Cathy Mohan said, sharing a comment made by Upper Class teacher Susan Butler. Graduation remarks are always a thoughtful blend of comments from faculty, staff, and each graduate's family.

Amelia began her Japhet education in January of 1998, at the age of 2 1/2. She started in the daycare with Dotty O'Ryan, but was soon moved to Preschool. Amelia's mother remembers her toddler, Amelia, reaching out to shake Dotty's hand and saying, "Pleased to meet you. I'm Amelia." Dotty's expression of "teacher love" for Amelia began at that moment, and her parents have felt that love for Amelia by the Japhet community ever since.

Amelia's teachers describe her as creative, expressive, a hard worker, and as a positive leader. When Intermediate and Upper class students were asked to reflect on the character qualities that stand out



*Amelia and her teachers: Betsy Stecker (mom, also), Susan Butler, and Robert Walker.*



*Amelia turned this piece of her art into postcards and gave one to every person who attended her Chapel on humility. As a graduation gift, the Parent Support Group had the original art framed for Amelia.*

about Amelia, peace, joy, and humility were at the top of the list. She is admired for her inclusiveness and ability to play and work hard.

Amelia's hobbies include drawing, scrapbooking, making jewelry, playing the piano and playing softball. Amelia is artistically talented, especially in graphic or modern art. She's played four years of slow-pitch softball, and this year she's on a fast-pitch team so that she's ready to play in high school.

Some of Amelia's special achievements include receiving an Art Award from Mrs. Hilzinger, sharing her 8th-grade Chapel on the character quality of humility, being confirmed in her Lutheran faith, and speaking at the Donor Reception in the fall about how Japhet has prepared her for her next experience: public high school in Royal Oak, Michigan.

"Amelia, we are grateful that your family chose Japhet for you," said Mrs. Mohan in closing. "You have blessed the Japhet community in many ways, and you are well prepared for attending high school in the fall."

## Strategic Plan Update

Now two years in development, Japhet School's Strategic Plan is steadily guiding us toward meeting our objectives. In April, the original Strategic Planning Committee, plus a number of new members, performed its annual review and made some positive changes.

Five of the original 12 strategies were found to be operational, which means we met our goals and they have become fully integrated within the daily operations of the school. These are: Alumni Relations, Fundraising, Grantwriting, and Tuition, and New Resources.

The Strategic Planning Committee discussed the need to implement a new strategy: Technology. This strategy addresses the need to prioritize Japhet's use of technology across the board, from managing our database to updating the software applications for student use. We already are making steady improvements in this area: we are on the cusp of utilizing brand-new database software, and our new web page has been launched. The Technology Committee has been re-energized and will lead the school's efforts to meet the specific goals of the Technology strategy.

The original Strategic Planning Workshop took place in April 2007, with Japhet community members representing faculty, staff, parents, alum, board members, and community members. Following the workshop, Strategic Coordinators were assigned to each strategy to write specific results and action steps with the support of a committee. Action steps were approved by the board in the fall and charted over a five-year calendar. If you have any questions regarding progress on our Strategic Plan, please contact Cathy Mohan.

## Board of Trustees, 2009/2010

Immediately following Graduation, Japhet's 2009/2010 Board of Trustees held their first meeting and sat down to work.

Trustees Alistair Savides, Barb Quincey, and Carole Hilzinger have concluded their terms on the Board, and we are most grateful for their service to Japhet School. Carole will continue her work as president of the GJS – Grandparents of Japhet School.

Three new members were elected to the board: Cassaundra Bing (who began serving in March of this year), Natalie Wright, and Mike Hedge.

**Cassaundra Bing** currently serves as General Manager for the Bing Metals Group Steel Processing Division. Cassaundra is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the \$60 million flat-roll steel facility. Cassaundra began her career by training in Accounting, and she has since worked in Quality, Purchasing, Materials, and Customer Service departments. Cassaundra graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Management and Economics from Michigan State University. She is a partner in The Watermark Detroit, a condominium project on the Detroit riverfront. She has an affiliation with Alternatives For Girls, a nonprofit organization that serves homeless and high-risk girls and young women. Cassaundra's daughter, Caris, has attended Japhet since third grade and will be a Japhet grad next spring.

**Natalie Wright** grew up on a farm in St. Louis, Michigan, with parents who "epitomized selflessness," she writes. She joined the Christian Science church in the neighboring town of Alma. She attended Michigan State University and her love of children motivated her to major in Child Development and Teaching. She has since taught

second grade and kindergarten. Natalie has served in various church capacities. For the last ten years she has been either First Reader or Reading Room Librarian at the First Church of Christ – Scientist, in Farmington. She is currently devoting her mornings to the public practice of Christian Science healing.

**Mike Hedge** is president and CEO of Hedge & Company, Inc. – a marketing and corporate communications company consulting business that he reestablished in April of this year – after having served as vice president of North America Marketing and Corporate Communications of Parrot, Inc. Mike has more than 30 years of experience in the communications field. He began his career after graduating Wayne State University with a degree in journalism and public relations. Mike has served on a number of boards, including Japhet School and the board of the Society of Automotive Analysts. He is an active member of the First Church of Christ – Scientist, in Birmingham.

Returning Japhet School board members include **Ted Balowski, Judy Gettel, Susan Golbiw, Terry Helgesen, David Holt, Julie Knaffla, Jack McNaughton, Ann Nicholson, Jay Schmitt, Penny Strelow, Patricia Tibbetts, and Nancy Thayer.**

Officers for the 2009/2010 school year are:

**Pat Tibbetts, President**  
**Julie Knaffla, Vice-President**  
**Penny Strelow, Secretary**  
**Jay Schmitt, Treasurer**

The Japhet School community extends its gratitude to current and former Board of Trustees who generously share their time, talents, and resources on behalf of Japhet.

## Going Green

Japhet's efforts to be a more environmentally responsible school were officially recognized in April, when Oakland County named us as a "Michigan Green School."

The Green Schools program, sponsored by Oakland Schools and the Oakland County Waste Resource Management, invited all Michigan schools to document their "green" practices and raise the bar to meet even more criteria that would, if successful, denote them as an officially green school.

Several of the green "mandates" were already happening at Japhet. For example, Japhet has been recycling paper for years, and students have been reusing magazines and newspapers for art projects. We have ecological resource materials available for checkout in the library, and we integrate the study of environmentally sound practices into the curriculum, especially during the months when we study the character qualities thrift and respect for others. In Life Skills class last year, students planted new gardens.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, we added a few new programs to meet the criteria: the school now enables families to recycle household batteries, students enjoyed sun-cooked hot dogs in May with the use of a solar cooker, and we added Michigan-native plants such as White Turtlehead and Cinnamon Fern to our outdoor gardens.

The effort was initiated and chaired by Japhet teacher Pam Mazurkiewicz and supported by parents and staff. The next time you're at Japhet, look for our new "Michigan Green School" flag. But more important, bring those used batteries from home, and we'll safely recycle them for you!



*Due to our efforts to be environmentally responsible – like this preschooler and Mrs. White demonstrate, by recycling – Japhet is now a Michigan Green School!*



## Music Enrichment of Highest Caliber

Marina Arsenijevic: Yugoslav piano prodigy, Carnegie Hall performer, composer, peace diplomat, and seller of 500,000+ recorded CDs. Oh, and one more thing – Japhet Chapel speaker!

Japhet School welcomed world-renowned concert pianist Marina Arsenijevic as a special guest speaker



*Marina delighted students with her incredible performance on our grand piano at Japhet.*

in May. Marina was born in Yugoslavia and grew up in Belgrade. As a piano prodigy, she made her solo concert debut at age nine performing compositions by Brahms, Beethoven and Chopin before an amazed audience of 2,000 people.

During her Chapel, Marina spoke to her upbringing in the 1980s when civil strife in Yugoslavia greatly affected Marina's outlook on life and her music. She craved peace and unity in the face of ethnic extremism. Although under great pressure from the many warring factions and the governments that supported them, she maintained her political neutrality, developing her hallmark: "Unity in the Face of Diversity." She immediately applied her vision for unity to her music, creating a new genre, the Ethno-Classical style. "Whenever I blend diverse cultural melodies with varied ethnic rhythms, regardless of their conflicted history, the music always reveals our common humanity," Marina has said.

This was her theme during her Chapel presentation, and she also shared portions of her original music on a DVD, performed live for students, and signed autographs.



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## Alumni News

### Grant Demeter J'07

Grant has enjoyed a great sophomore year at University of Detroit Jesuit High School. In addition to maintaining a strong GPA in his academics, Grant ran track this spring. He specialized in the 400 M and 800 M races which culminated in an opportunity to compete at regional and state championships. Grant was also very involved in drama again this year and played J.J. Singleton and Mottola in the play *The Sting* last fall and then wowed the crowd as Baby John in *West Side Story* in spring.



*Grant Demeter (J'07), in full stage make-up, pauses for a family snapshot after his performance in West Side Story. His two sisters attend Japhet.*

### Carolyn Commer J'99

Carolyn has completed another degree! She writes to tell us that after graduating from Evergreen State College with a BA in Liberal Arts in 2007, she went on to earn a Master's degree from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She feels that her most promising research came in the analysis of the use of technology and online classes in higher education. This past year Carolyn immersed herself in education once again as she pursued and completed a master's degree, this time in Liberal Arts after an intensive study of the "Great Books" which included learning ancient Greek and translating works by Plato. This summer Carolyn is preparing and presenting research on Ancient Greek Rhetoric to an international conference in Montreal. In fall she will return to Carnegie Mellon to work on her PhD in Rhetoric and continue her work in higher education policy as well as begin to teach Argument Theory to undergraduate students. She is grateful to all of her teachers over the years and to those at Japhet who started her on a career which includes public speaking. Congratulations, Carolyn! What a wonderful accomplishment.

### High school graduates and college plans

Kiersten Andersen - J'05	Principia College
Tucker Blake - J'05	Albion College
Will Butler - XJ'05	University of Michigan
Anthony Dier - J'05	Saginaw Valley State
John Williamson - XJ'05	Oakland University

**Do you have alumni news to share?**

**Please send news and photos to Robin Pospisil, Director of Admissions, at [robinpospisil@japhet.org](mailto:robinpospisil@japhet.org).**