

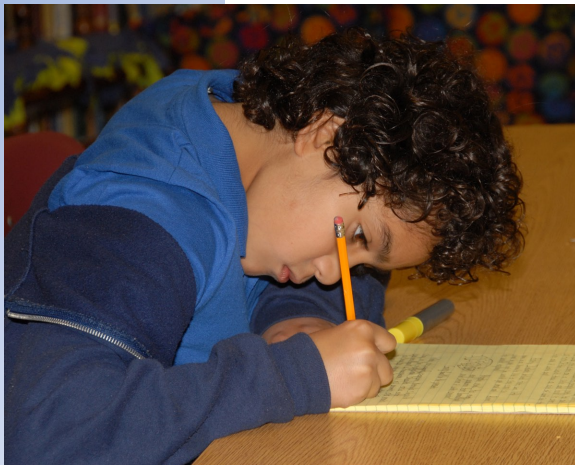


Japhet School nurtures and prepares each child for life by integrating character education with a strong academic program.

Best Practice in Action: Writer's Workshop!

"I learn in my classroom. What happens there has changed; it continually changes. My aims stay constant – I want us to go deep inside language, using it to know and shape and play with our worlds – but my practices evolve. This 'going deeper' is research, which shows me the wonders of my kids, not my methods. But it has also brought me full circle. What I learn with these students, collaborating with them as a writer and reader who wonders about writing and reading, makes me a better teacher – not great maybe, but at least grounded in the logic of learning and growing."

-- Nancie Atwell, teacher and author of *In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents*



A 6th-grade student is hard at work in Writer's Workshop.

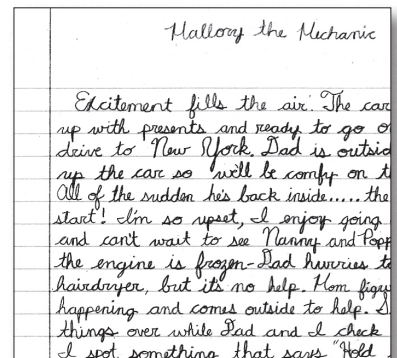
Atwell, an acclaimed educator, summarizes what it means to apply best-practice teaching to the Language Arts classroom: to evolve from a teacher-governed curriculum to one that allows students to discover the writers within themselves.

Beginning this school year, our four grade-level classrooms have all made the transformation to Writer's Workshop, a change that resulted from a thorough Language Arts curriculum review. Teaching the writing process begins in Primary Class, where students first learn what it means to do "jots" and about an author's purpose. The teaching priority for students who are 6 and 7 years old is reading, so Writer's Workshop familiarizes students with the terms and lays a foundation. In Middle Class, daily mini-lessons occur. Visit the rug area in Middle Class, and you'll witness evidence of writing strategies being taught every

day. Intermediate and Upper Class students also have daily mini-lessons, peer reviews, and one-on-one, teacher-to-writer conferencing.

In all, Writer's Workshop helps students become confident and independent writers. A key tool is the Writer's Notebook, a black-and-white composition notebook that students all have to capture ideas during mini-lessons and their own "writing territories," a collection of their interests and wonders. Teachers record lessons on large chart paper, to which students can refer if they need help later.

"I love how Writer's Workshop teaches a student to be self-directed," says Intermediate Class homeroom teacher Brenda Gaunt, "Students feel that they have more control of their choices, which translates into more personal responsibility and, ultimately, an understanding of how to create many genres of writing by relying on their own skills."



A remarkable 5th-grade memoir.

Upcoming Events:

- Science Extravaganza & Dessert Auction
March 14
- Open House
April 18
- Grandparents' Tea
April 19
- Strategic Plan Meeting
April 24
- Benefit Fundraising Dinner
May 6
- Spring Sharing
May 19 & 20
- Spring Sharing Gala
May 21
- Graduation
June 11



A Chinese foreign exchange student living with a faculty member visited during Social Studies Fair and International Week.



Intermediate Class students worked in teams to create delicious plant and animal cell "cakes," using candies as cell parts.



INSPO events often include multi-age activities. Here, students made collages from images that represent punctuality.



Nebuchandrezzar, represented by a UC student in Global Studies class, has Susan Butler at his side with a student-made fan.



These Middle Class boys represented notable Americans John James Audubon and Tex Ritter during Social Studies Fair.



Primary Class students love Pajama Day ... and their teacher, Janet Andersen.

HEAD OF SCHOOL MESSAGE



I received a gift from my son's college roommate. Saad is from Pakistan and his family has a vacation home in Saudi Arabia. After I expressed interest in Middle Eastern culture, Saad's family sent me an authentic outfit from Saudi Arabia. I was touched by the gift; however, it is a "different" outfit for me. The jewels and vibrant design of the velour caftan are out of my wardrobe comfort zone. I wasn't sure I could actually wear it anywhere outside of my home, but could I wear it for Japhet's International Week?

With encouragement, I chose to wear it for our Taste of the World luncheon. This is a special Japhet tradition, which features foods from around the world. Each class makes a dish to share. This year's tastes included Japanese Vegetable Curry, Dutch Funnel Cake, Greek Olive Tapenade, Chinese Dumplings, and more. A Kindergarten student with a full plate exclaimed in delight, "this is the best lunch ever!"

Watching the Taste of the World luncheon, I saw peace, joy, and sharing as students expressed their courage to try new foods. I, too, had a moment of courage — entering the gym in my new, unique outfit. And in the end, no one thought my outfit different! Preschoolers thought it was "soft." Many students loved my caftan — it was "neat." A faculty member found it "stunning." I was reminded of the generous nature of our Japhet community — curious and accepting of all things different — in this treasured moment of coming together during International Week.

— Cathy Mohan

Serving our Neighborhood

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.” ~Anne Frank

The words of this heroine graced our front lobby bulletin board in December, inspiring families, staff, and guests to participate in our holiday service project. In November and December, we “adopted” a local family of six in need. Students learned that the family was approaching winter without adequate coats, car seats, or pillows.

Each Japhet classroom took on a particular need, such as pillows and sheets, or coats and boots. Some classrooms collected money instead of items, and then went on a class field trip to choose the purchases together. “The students raised more than enough money to fulfill the needs, so they were given the charge to also buy a present for each of the children,” says Primary Class teacher Janet Andersen. “It was a special moment when they brought these presents to me, explaining why they chose them with such joy and a true love of giving.”

Our holiday service project concluded with Family Service Night — a new Japhet event that took place immediately following Upper Class’ Spaghetti Supper — when families wrapped the donations together in the Art Room.

Moving forward, Japhet’s Recycling Committee initiated a Coat Drive during January, encouraging families to “recycle” gently used coats and gloves to give to the South Oakland Shelter in Royal Oak. As spring approaches, Earth Day projects, a neighborhood clean-up, and other activities are planned to wrap up our year-long service focus.



Japhet families wrapped gifts together on Family Service Night.



With practice and concentration, Preschoolers learn how to write their names.



These Upper Class girls brought creativity to recess using snow as an artistic medium!



An after-school Lego robotics club, the Tech Trekkers, invited students of all ages to join them in an open build activity.



Primary Class students studied magnets with hands-on experiments.

BENEFIT DINNER ON MAY 6

Plans are underway for the Japhet School Benefit Dinner the evening of May 6 at the Bloomfield Hills Country Club. If you would like more information about this fundraising event, please contact Japhet School. Inquiries will be passed on to board member and event chair Julie Knaffla.

The Benefit Dinner is an evening event that is modeled after our annual 18 Reasons for Hope luncheon. This year’s 18 Reasons keynote, Japhet parent Ty Partridge, inspired guests with, “Every child has a unique set of sensibilities and motivations; an individual vision of wonder and creativity, and at Japhet such special qualities in each child are embraced and cultivated... Japhet’s true strength is that there has always been a constant emphasis on the needs of the child as a whole person.”



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Join us for Spring Sharing on May 19 & 20 and the Gala on May 21

Alumni News

JÉRÉMIE LANGLOIS J'08

Jérémié sends us news from his new home in Maadi, a suburb of Cairo, Egypt. A new position for his dad prompted the move for their family during the summer. Jérémié is a sophomore at Cairo American College, a well-known college preparatory high school in Egypt. Outside of school hours he enjoys spending time with new friends and volunteering at a local Egyptian school. Jérémié says he is appreciating his new surroundings because they are giving him the opportunity to learn more, experience more, and meet different people. He especially appreciates “people’s kindness, hospitality and craziness.” He feels that Japhet prepared him for this experience because implementing the character qualities learned at Japhet is even more important when living in a culturally diverse and culturally sensitive environment.

DANIEL FORD J'99

Daniel is living in St. Croix again, managing properties with his mother. They have 110 homes that they manage and rent on the most beautiful island in the Caribbean. Daniel says Life Skills class and living at the Pospisil’s home helped him as he also works part-time cooking for a catering company at the local yacht club. Daniel enjoys diving and boating and wants us all to know that it’s 85° and sunny in January in St. Croix. He keeps in touch with a wide range of Japhet and Principia Upper School friends via Facebook and plans to do some summer traveling on the mainland. Michigan and Japhet School are definitely on his list of stops.



Last year’s spring Gala was well supported by Japhet alumni.

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