



## In service to others

**With the gift of knowledge and understanding of moral and spiritual values comes an obligation to help mankind.**

Japhet School was founded in 1973 by dedicated individuals who were seeking an education for children that not only provided strong academics, but one that included moral and spiritual values. They understood the necessity and value of educating the whole child. Thus, our mission and philosophy were created to include a unique approach to helping children grow as individuals and as confident learners.

Today, Japhet's administration, faculty and staff, and Board of Trustees continue to keep the mission at the forefront of all that is valued in our students' school experience. In seeking to fulfill our mission, "to nurture and prepare each child for life by integrating character education with a strong academic program," a community service component was added to our curriculum for our middle school students. As a graduation requirement, Upper Class students must complete 10 hours of community service each year, and share their experiences during an

InSPO presentation. Intermediate Class students are encouraged to complete 6 hours of community service each year. All of our students, from Preschool through eighth grade, are being taught the value of helping others.

**Why is community service so important and valued and why should young people be involved in service?**

Heather Lafferty, CEO and executive director of Habitat for Humanity in Metro Denver shares this, "I hold a core fundamental value that no one, from the poorest to the richest, is successful without the help and support of others. There are just different ways that happens. And growing into our full potential is our ultimate goal as individuals. Connections between people make us human. Service brings us together. It focuses on our common humanity."

At Japhet School, our 18 character qualities are woven right into our teaching and school day experience: initiative, courage, gratitude, obedience, punctuality, justice, respect for self, respect for others, self-control, reliability, judgment, patriotism, joy, indus-

try, humility, peace, thrift, and personal habits. It's not hard to envision just how students and adults alike express each one of these qualities while performing service for others. Community service also provides the opportunity to develop skills in leadership, communication, working well with a team, and finding solutions for problems.

Liz Grunow and Susan Eggleston teach Japhet School's middle school students and partner as curriculum co-coordinators. Together they planned a year-long program for their students with a special focus on service outreach. "Service learning is action-based," says Eggleston. "Involving all of our students in a genuine activity that can improve the lives of those around them brings to life the very essence of the qualities of good character. Student engagement in meaningful service fosters a real-life understanding of empathy." Grunow adds, "Our time in the community helps our students to be able to see the real-world impact of character in action. It's one thing to organize a drive, it's doubly impactful for them to eyewitness to the enormous undertaking of community service organizations."

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**Special Message from Kerri Vizena:** Education via distance learning through the rest of this school year is being provided to the best of our teachers' ability. My heart is full of gratitude for these amazing people who continue to be inspired, to adapt, be courageous, and to learn and grow as well. I also commend our students for their joy and adaptability, and our parents for their commitment to their children's education. The Japhet School community has risen to meet this challenge!

As for spring events, Spring Sharing will not take place this year as a traditional musical and dramatic performance. Japhet's Graduation ceremony, an inspiring tradition, will occur in some way -- even if digitally. Please stay tuned as plans progress.

Sincerely, Kerri G. Vizena, Head of School





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## In service to others - the Golden Rule in action!

What a pleasure it is to share with you the community service opportunities our students experienced this year. These experiences in service to others provided time to think of others' needs and put into action our desire and responsibility to help others.

- Led by Penny Witt and Marie Anderson, our Kids for Peace chapter organized three service activities. Initiated by our 5th and 6th grade students, new pajamas in all sizes from infant to adult were collected. Canned goods and boxed goods were also donated and organized into bagged meals. During our Annual Family Service Night on December 12, these items were packaged and donated to Macomb Feeding the Need. Not to forget our animals in need, Kids for Peace also organized an activity to make cat toys and donated them to the Royal Oak Animal Shelter.
- Primary Class student Elise Witt presented the idea to me to organize a Halloween service project for Treats for Troops, sending donated Halloween candy to soldiers in active duty and veterans through the organization Soldiers' Angels. This project was led by Elise who saw a need and then expressed leadership, initiative, respect for others, and joy to see the project to the finish line. Additionally, during Family Service Night, attendees created note cards to soldiers expressing appreciation for their service.
- Led by Pam Mazurkiewicz, students

collected gently used winter gear in all sizes and donated them to the Macomb Foster Closet.

- In January, Intermediate teacher Liz Grunow and Upper Class teacher Susan Eggleston led students on a service learning experience to Gleaners Food Bank. During this opportunity, students organized food into bags for students experiencing food insecurities. They learned that many students don't have enough food to eat over the weekend and need additional support to eat nutritious food.
- At our Family Math Night in January, families created puzzles, an art+math integration! The puzzles were donated to the Royal Oak Beaumont Children's Hospital.
- At Dance for Japhet in early February, we made Valentines and donated them to the Chester Street Residence nursing facility for their residents' party the next day.
- In mid-February, Kindergarten through eighth grade students were provided the opportunity to share their skills of helping others at Forgotten Harvest in Oak Park. Students learned that Forgotten Harvest is dedicated to relieving hunger and preventing nutritious food waste. During our visit, students packed more than 1,400 pounds of food for families!

The trip to Forgotten Harvest provided a remarkable and meaningful community service opportunity for our students and staff. This experience helped students to understand more clearly the problem of food insecurities and

the value of helping others in need. As we worked together, it was a joy to witness everyone's genuine acts of kindness to be of service to others.

## Japhet School is a springboard to opportunity, self-discovery, and empathy for others.

In a world of ever-developing technology and electronic communication, I'm grateful we are able to pause and reflect on the importance of direct contact and face-to-face communication with others. To have compassion and empathy for others, place another's needs before our own, put into action our desire to serve others, benefits not only those receiving the support and assistance, but those providing the service. It's a time for self-discovery and building character through the opportunity of serving others. One by one, one step at a time, each one of us has the ability and power to make our schools, our communities, and the world a better place. Please join me and our entire Japhet community in serving others. Truly -- what benefits one, benefits all! The Japhet door is open for service learning opportunities and I welcome your thoughts on ways in which Japhet School students and staff may contribute to making a difference in the world. Character, Academics, Leadership ... and Community Service make Japhet School the true champion of the whole child!

In joy of service to others,

**Kerri G. Vizena**  
Head of School







**IPADS**



**COURTYARD CLIMBER WITH MANY FUN FEATURES**



**SPINNER**



**MAIN PLAYGROUND CLIMBER**



**GA-GA PIT**



**CHROMEBOOKS**



**OUTDOOR ENRICHMENT**



**LARGE DISPLAY MONITORS**



**IMACS**

# Invested in Learning

*In our fall newsletter, we shared we were “Jumping for Joy” at the news that we had received a \$145,000 grant award from the Joseph and Mary Cacioppo Foundation that was specifically to fund scholarship, outdoor education, and technology. We’re pleased to share this photographic tour of the new investments in place that enrich students’ learning!*

Our large playground on the north end of campus now features a large orange climber, a spinner, and a ga-ga pit. Ga-ga is a competitive game in which

players contained within the pit try to avoid getting touched by a ball.

Our Early Childhood courtyard in the middle of the school now has an age-appropriate climber with interactive features, a bright green tunnel slide, and a jumbo sandbox.

We are collaborating with a local outdoor school called Firefly Forest, and elementary and middle school students will join Firefly Forest during the school day by walking to a forested park in spring for outdoor education. Firefly Forest also was offered as after-school enrichment, and above you can see participating students enjoying the natural elements.

Grant funds dedicated to technology brought brand-new Chromebooks for real-time, collaborative learning for students in 3rd through 8th grades. Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade students share a fleet of iPads, and the iPads also are used by older students for video-reporting.

IT investments also include brand-new iMacs and extra large display monitors. Above, Intermediate Class students work together on an iMac to lay out the student newspaper, and students used both Chromebooks and new display monitors to discuss the Democratic Primaries on Super Tuesday.



# GIVING STORIES

**We are proud to introduce this warm and considerate man who has become a valued gift to our community: Robert Schreiber, Patrol Officer, Clawson Police Department**

At well over 6 feet tall, Officer Schreiber is easy to spot when he comes to school for his almost weekly visit. Preschoolers also are quick to announce his arrival, with their gleeful cheers of "It's Officer Bob!" and "Hi, Officer Bob!" and "Can I hug you, Officer Bob?" We sat down with Officer Bob, as he prefers to be called, to learn more about him as a whole person.

## **What was your first impression when you first came to Japhet School?**

*"Right away I could tell how very warm it was here. Everybody was so nice. While the school was clearly safe, it wasn't rigid."*

## **Do you have children of your own?**

*"I do. I have one son, who is on scholarship to Wayne State University studying engineering. I'm very proud of him."*

## **In 2019 you were named Clawson Police Officer of the Year. What's that all about?**

*"I was very honored. I won it early in my career as well. This is my 27th year in law enforcement, and my 24th with Clawson. Since going to the day shift I've been able to do more community service, so that may have been part of why I received the award."*

## **What kinds of community service do you do?**

*Personally, I like to get involved with Special Olympics at St. Jude's Hospital. I was fortunate: when my son was born, he was born healthy. In gratitude I decided I would donate as much as I could to these two organizations. I also volunteer for the Special Olympics. I like to cheer on the athletes, so they know there are people there for them. On behalf of the Clawson PD, I like to visit schools and take part in the activities that they have going on. We host a Christmas toy drive, and we join holiday festivities with the kids in Downtown Clawson and in the schools. We try to be very community friendly."*



## **What sets Japhet School apart from other schools?**

*"I can see that with smaller classrooms, teachers can have more contact with students. This is the kind of school I would have sent my son to, had it been in Clawson then. I do highly recommend it to people! It's a very loving, very secure school. It feels like family."*

## **What character qualities do you see in action at Japhet School?**

*"First, gratitude -- everyone seems so thankful for what they have. And patriotism -- when I come here for activities, I can see that respecting the flag and our country is important. There is joy -- everyone is happy when I come here. And I don't think it's my presence -- I think Japhet people are just happy. Respect for others -- these kids seem to treat each other like brothers and sisters, and they look out for each other. Obedience -- everyone is so well behaved here. And lastly, peace. When I come here, it's like I'm in another world."*

## **What character qualities are needed as a police officer?**

*"Reliability comes first. When you tell someone you're going to do something, you need to do it. Judgment is important as a patrolman. We encounter so many different problems, and we need to be wise when we encounter them. We all have courage as a shared trait. When people are running from something, we have to run to it. Peace is important -- we go where everything is in an uproar, and we try to restore the peace and talk people back down."*

## **Why is it important to teach character?**

*"I think it's very important because as students grow and become adults, these are qualities that make for a great society, a great family, a great neighbor. That's what you at Japhet are teaching."*

 CUT AND RETURN TO: JAPHET SCHOOL, 839 SOUTH CROOKS ROAD, CLAWSON, MI 48017

# JAPHET SCHOOL Annual Giving Fund



Donations to the Annual Giving Fund are most needed, and donations of all sizes are helpful. Japhet School is a 501(c)(3) organization, and your gift is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Payment method: ☐ Check ☐ Visa ☐ AmEx ☐ Mastercard

\$\_\_\_\_\_ Please accept my gift for the **Annual Giving Fund**

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- ☐ My employer will match my gift. (Please obtain a form from your HR office and include it with your contribution.)  
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## ALUMNI NEWS



**Justin Smith, XJ'15:** University of Detroit Jesuit HS (Summa Cum Laude, 1 of 12 selected to participate in a medical philanthropic mission to the Philippines, editor of Inescape Magazine awarded first place in the national high school literary publication, club soccer and baseball, founded his own legal

services business in 2018, awarded the Trustees' Scholarship at Loyola University in Chicago). Justin's parents feel that he has taken the values instilled and character qualities studied at Japhet School forward as he has moved through his academic career. Justin is currently enrolled at Loyola University in Chicago majoring in entrepreneurial business.



**Bethany (Raymond) King J'02:** 18 years after graduating from Japhet School, Bethany's three children will all be attending Japhet School in fall. Her son Aiden (Intermediate Class) and Annabell (Primary Class) transferred to Japhet in November this year and youngest daughter Arwynn has enrolled

in Preschool for fall. Bethany says she has always wanted her children to be here and feels blessed and grateful that they are enrolled and thriving. She sees much of what her mother saw years ago in that Japhet provides that sense of family and community enveloping her family. Bethany says it is almost difficult to separate her experience as a student from her current experience as a parent. The community continues to give her peace, a renewed passion for education, and a sense of relief. Her children, she says, are experiencing the character and kindness not always seen in their previous schools. Bethany and her husband Jacob are happy to see their children engaged, joyful, and positive.



**Alumni Volunteers:** Alumni happily served at this year's Spaghetti Supper/Family Service Night, Chili Dinner/Family Math Night, and Dance for Japhet! The events benefited from the experience and efforts of alumni from Japhet's class of 2003 through our most recent graduates in the class of

2019. All involved agreed that it was a fun way to get together and to support Japhet School. We look forward to offering such opportunities at upcoming events and in the years to come. Let us know if you would like to be a part of these activities! *Groups of helpful alumni turned out for Spaghetti Supper/Family Service Night, Chili Dinner/Family Math Night, and Dance for Japhet! In this photo, alumni from the class of 2003 to the class of 2019 are represented.*

## FUTURE JAPHET PRESCHOOLER



**Tori (Ellithorpe) J'04 and Zach Barrette** proudly announce the arrival of their son James Alfred Barrette on October 12, 2019. Jamie weighed in at 7 pounds, 14 ounces and 19 3/4 inches in length. Tori, Zach and Jamie live in Bristol, Connecticut where Zach works for ESPN and Tori has returned to her

position as a children's librarian on a part-time basis. They look forward to visits from grandma Susan Ellithorpe, Japhet School Board of Trustees member, former Japhet Preschool and Kindergarten teacher and sponsor of Japhet's Kids for Peace chapter.

### 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).

## Join Us for Bowl-a-bration!

You, your friends, and local companies are invited to come together to support Japhet School in our first-ever **"Bowl-a-bration!"** This event is in lieu of our traditional golf outing. Families with children, alumni, faculty and staff, friends of the school, and corporate sponsors are all invited. The original date was May 9 at Astro Lanes. This event is postponed with a hope to host it in late summer or fall. **Stay tuned for a NEW date!**

Attendees will enjoy two games, contests and prizes, shoe rental, a pizza party, and a silent auction. There are separate rates for children, alumni, adults, and teams of four. We also have a "cheering section" option for non-bowlers who want to join the fun!

**Supportive sponsors are key to making this event a fundraising success.** Please reach out to your suppliers, business partners, and individuals to see if they would like to be a valued Bowl-a-bration sponsor. We offer sponsorships in the range of \$200 to \$1,000.

Thank you for sharing this event! **Get all the details online at [japhetschool.org/bowlabration](http://japhetschool.org/bowlabration).**

## Merit Scholarship Momentum

It's springtime, which means it's time many of our students ask themselves, "Should I apply for a merit scholarship?"

Merit scholarships are tuition awards that recognize students' efforts to do their best academically and in their expressions of character. They are competitive. Students apply for one or two specific scholarships, acquire two letters of recommendation, and participate in an essay-writing session. The writing prompts and evaluations are age-appropriate, since students in 1st through 7th grade may apply. (For 2020, the essay-writing session is being replaced with live interviews.)

We are pleased to offer 11 funded scholarships, ranging in value from \$500 to \$2000, and while all scholarships require excellence in character, their academic focus differs. Several are general academic, two are math-related, two are focused in science, and this year we have a brand-new scholarship that focuses on the visual arts sponsored by Kerri and Mark Vizena in honor of Kerri's artistic mother, Janece Groener.

Completed essays are normally read anonymously by the Scholarship Committee which consists of alumni, former Japhet faculty and staff, former Japhet Heads of School, scholarship funders, and other friends of the school. The readers use a scoring rubric that guides them, and is returned to Japhet School administrators to compile. (This year, awards will be based on letters of recommendation and the live interviews.)

Scholarship applicants will receive news of their awards in early June.

We would like to thank all of the scholarship providers for their support of Japhet School students and families. We would also like to thank those on the Scholarship Committee for their commitment to the process and for their thoughtful and sincere words and commentary.

To learn more about funding a merit scholarship or become involved as a future scholarship reader, please contact Robin Pospisil or Kerri Vizena at Japhet School.





## JAPHET SCHOOL

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# Innovation Celebration

A Carseat Carousel that automatically shifts an infant's carseat close to the door after the car is parked ... the High Top, a sneaker that makes a person taller and able to reach things ... an American Future City that tackles the challenge of providing sustainable water ... these are just a few examples of our students' innovative thinking that they created for our Innovation Celebration in March.

Formerly called Invention Fair, we now call this endeavor an Innovation Celebration. "Innovation Celebration clearly signifies that at Japhet School we choose to celebrate innovative and inventive thinking that utilizes a problem-solving approach," says Kerri Vizena. "In an ever-changing world of rapid advancement in technology, it's important that our students understand the need to think with a growth mindset."

As is Japhet School's tradition, sharing students' innovative thinking is a special day. We could not open the event to the community this year, but students did present to one another.

Preschool and Kindergarten classrooms collaborated on fun group projects that they presented to student visitors.

Primary and Middle Class students brainstormed problems, and each student created an invention. They created a physical model -- some created a working prototype, others made a mock-up with imaginary functions -- that solved the problem.

Intermediate and Upper Class students participated in the Future City, a project-based learning program in which middle school students across the United States imagine, research, design, and build cities of the future. Future City culminates in a competition. Japhet School students, in our pilot year, completed the project and attended the Detroit competition for information but did not compete this year. During Innovation Celebration, students hosted a panel discussion to the student body, faculty, and staff about their experience.

