



THRIVING in unprecedented times

FIRST AND FOREMOST: GRATITUDE

gratitude to our faculty and staff who met throughout their summer, voiced concerns and strategies, shared a spirit of willingness, and expressed courage and selflessness as they agreed to teach students in person through the height of the pandemic.

gratitude to our parents who have obeyed strict protocols, kept their children home with a mere sniffle, and have—since our first day in September—expressed trust as they sent their children into school every day without ever being allowed to come inside themselves. The concept of “reciprocal trust” between parents and employees was especially felt this year.

gratitude to our trustees and friends who held Japhet School high in thought and contributed generously to Japhet School, helping to offset additional pandemic-related expenses and working to bridge the annual gap between tuition income and regular operating costs. This gap was larger this year because we had to keep our classes small for safety, despite waiting lists for two classrooms. The need for financial support is constant, and you can give by visiting japhetschool.org and clicking “Donate.”

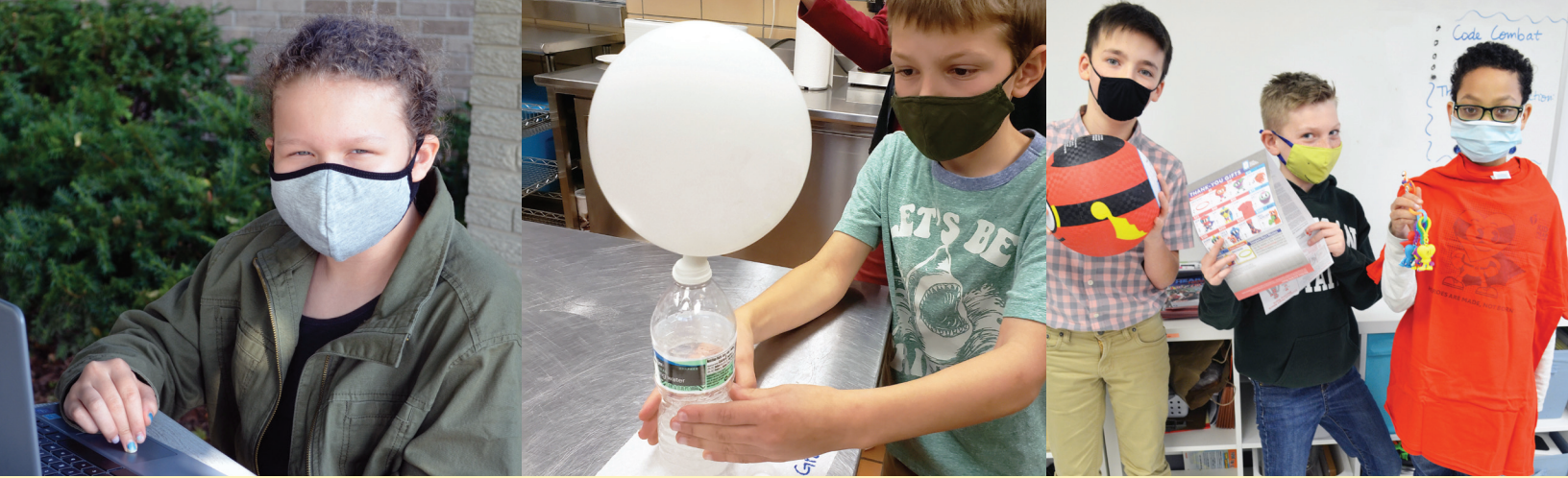
gratitude to the whole community for understanding that our doors were not open this year to anyone except students, faculty, staff, and the rare deliveryman. We miss seeing you and look forward to seeing you again.

And of course, we have **gratitude** for the very center of Japhet School—our students—who make it all worthwhile. Gratitude for their joy in learning despite the unique conditions, their cheerful adaptability, and their willingness to wear a mask all day long—including at recess—without argument. In so many ways, children serve as our role models.

small but MIGHTY

The next time you have the opportunity, thank a Japhet School teacher for this year. Our teachers gave up breaks to supervise virtual special classes. They had the added responsibilities of sanitizing desks, toys, pens, books, math manipulatives...it's a long list. They became moms (and a dad) to re-teach and demand proper hand-washing and hygiene continually. All the while, they learned new technology (most classroom teachers received Macbooks and large-screen monitors) and endured growing pains while navigating new hardware, software, and connectivity challenges at times.

“**small but MIGHTY**” has become our unofficial motto. Our small school size does not limit us, and this year served to benefit us. We have sincere empathy for our fellow schools and their communities that mostly stayed in virtual learning mode; to make the required adaptations to teach hundreds of children in person was insurmountable for most schools until spring. Being small was a mighty blessing in 2020/2021.



CONTINUED FROM COVER

Holding steady through the end of the year

As each school tradition popped up in the calendar, we either pivoted to a virtual experience or made the hard decision to cancel. We hosted a wonderful 18 Reasons for Hope event, Gratitude Service, and Social Studies Fair virtually. But our Middle School trip to camp, Holiday Giving, Family Service and Family Math nights, and most recently Spring Sharing were canceled for this year, as we had to prioritize pragmatics and safety over tradition and expectation. Looking ahead, we are excited to be in the midst of planning an entirely outdoor event for our families in May, we will have a lovely Graduation in June

(likely virtual, but stay tuned), and we are optimistic about hosting a golf outing in August.

While we have high hopes for a 2021/2022 school year with normal health protocols, our greatest sentiment brings us back to the beginning: gratitude. We are thankful we have thrived during a very challenging and unprecedented year.

See for yourself through Classroom Windows (Pg. 4 & 5). Look for the ‘smeyes’—smiling eyes! Despite everything, it’s been a very good year to be a Japhet School student!

FACULTY MEMBERS SHARE THEIR REFLECTIONS

Lessons learned and silver linings

“Coming in on their own has really helped Preschoolers develop independence. No long good-byes or good-bye tears. They come in, put their things away themselves, and join the classroom right away! It’s made such a difference ... I hope in some way to continue it.”

Carrie Huber, Preschool teacher

“I was against having desks in Kindergarten at first, but they quickly became a wonderful part of our classroom. Students enjoyed having their own spaces and being organized. Working and even playing at desks helped them be more attentive to lessons and to one another.”

Leslie Tonon, Kindergarten teacher

“Students came back to school in August with such joy and freedom. They didn’t let COVID interfere with their expressions of joy. I’m grateful that we didn’t have students being afraid.”

Janet Andersen, Primary Class teacher

“I’ve been impressed with how my students made a school tradition their own. We didn’t have Pumpkin Patch buddies this year because we didn’t have the field trip and we didn’t mix classes. But my students initiated writing to Primary Class anyway. It was a tradition special to them, and they made it happen.”

Liz Grunow, Intermediate Class teacher

“Our Social Studies Fair was virtual, which also meant that only one student spoke at a time. Each student could be clearly heard, sharing their research and report with fellow students and parents. Giving each student this moment built confidence, and their extensive work was worthy of the pause we all gave to listen.”

Susan Eggleston, Upper Class teacher

“The students have learned more about technology, which is very important for their futures. We’ve also found many more reasons to go outside, such as conducting science experiments and utilizing the outdoor classroom.”

Christine Pray, Middle Class teacher

“Middle School students change clothes before and after physical education class, and I’ve been grateful for the new only-two-students-in-the-bathroom rule. It’s a small thing, but it means no more shenanigans!”

Sam Herrick, Physical Education teacher

“I really believe in the value of holding books in your hands, but I needed to implement digital tools for reading support and discovered they are amazing. I was hesitant at first, but these applications really work, and the students enjoy them.”

Pam Mazurkiewicz, Reading Specialist

“Students spent a lot more time outside in fall in recess, physical education, and even some academic classes. This is something that can be continued beyond the pandemic with refinement.”

Robin Pospisil, Admissions Director and Life Skills teacher

“There has been an overall sense of peace this year. Students are arriving to class joyously, they are happy coming to and from school, saying ‘Good night! See you tomorrow!’ Hallways are peaceful. There’s such a great sense of positivity.”

Marti Minard, Art teacher

“Having latchkey in the gym now allows the children to be active right after school, and the various grades play peacefully together. During recess, I feel the students may appreciate being outside more.”

Margie Brown, After-school Care and Recess assistant

Inspired by The Master Teacher “BE” Poster Series, Kerri Vizena reflects on a very unique school year.

BE AMAZING

“It’s up to you to illuminate the world.” Phillippe Venier

The circumstances of this year have asked much of us as individuals and as members of the Japhet Family. They have brought about tremendous changes and opportunities for reflection and to sharpen our pivoting skills. We’ve perfected our skills in adapting, adjusting, and reassuring. I’m very pleased to share that we have soared in so many ways this school year! The partnership among parents, faculty, and staff has been strengthened as never before. The foundation for this year’s physical opening for on-campus teaching and learning in September was built on trust—trust that decisions were made thoughtfully and carefully, always keeping the safety and health of students, faculty, and staff our number one priority.

BE BRAVE

“Refuse to accept the many reasons why it can’t be done and ask if there are any reasons it can be done.”

Hanoch McCarty

Our familiar 18 Reasons for Hope Fundraiser was hugely successful due to innovative thinking and preparation. We expressed courage as we committed to moving forward with our first ever virtual fundraiser for this signature event. Everyone was receptive to adjusting to a virtual fundraiser instead of our traditional luncheon. We shared our story far and wide to our familiar Japhet friends and welcomed new friends into the Japhet giving family through social media and our website. We enlarged our borders and introduced many new friends to Japhet School. We doubled the funds raised from the previous year—nearly \$90,000 raised to support our mission!

BE INSPIRING

“It’s a great satisfaction that for a brief point in time you made a difference.” Irene Natividad

I continue to be inspired by our students who daily express joy for on-campus learning, appreciate their teachers, and embrace friendships with their classmates. What an inspiration for all of us to see our teachers at their posts since

September when most other schools weren’t offering on-campus learning. Teachers keep the mission of Japhet School and their students close to their hearts. It’s been a joy to witness the strengthening of these relationships and the depth of dedication by Japhet School teachers and staff. And of course, I am inspired by Japhet’s parents who have entrusted their children to us—every day letting go and watching their young ones cheerfully enter the school building—while not being able to enter the building themselves. I’m truly inspired by Jay Schmitt, former Board of Trustees member, who for decades dedicated his life to serving Japhet School. Please read more about Jay and his wife Sharon in our “Giving Stories” section of the newsletter.

BE UNSTOPPABLE

“Never let the fear of striking out get in your way.” Babe Ruth

During the past year, there were times when fear, or being afraid of the unknown, would try to impede our ability to meet the familiar academic standards and general operation of the school. With perseverance, commitment, and determination we moved forward while honoring the health and safety guidelines that have served Japhet School so very well. Keeping our mission always in sight, we researched and implemented alternate ways of accomplishing our traditional teaching, fundraising, and school activities. I have truly appreciated the thoughtful discussions and passion expressed by all who have been involved in each decision-making process. Thank you to Japhet School’s Board of Trustees for their continued support and dedication.

BE THE DIFFERENCE

“Look the world straight in the eye.” Helen Keller

We’re proud of what we do, and we’re seeking increased avenues to share who we are and how we fulfill our mission—to nurture and prepare each child for life by integrating character education with a strong academic program. We know that our students are confident learners, strong communicators, and the future leaders of their communities.

We seek to provide Japhet students an education that will propel them on to their next educational experience with confidence and a secure academic foundation. As you read through this newsletter, please take the time to learn about our former students who have made a difference—they are the difference—unique in their contributions and dedicated to their individual journeys.

BE GRATEFUL

“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life, it turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion into clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.” Melody Beattie

Gratitude brings all experiences into focus—it brings perspective to challenges that become opportunities to learn and grow. This past year, gratitude has been the driving force behind each step forward. We have taken wonderful steps—progressive steps—to find solutions to everyday experiences. Opportunities that previously were taken for granted, suddenly became only possibilities. I’m truly grateful that we’ve gained new perspectives and new friendships through this year. I appreciate our new families that found their way to our door and cherish the education their children are receiving—and those families that stayed right with us as we determined our on-campus learning procedures. I’m grateful for faculty and staff who voiced their thoughts and opinions as we have navigated through this past year. It was not easy, but we learned more about our ability to be strong in adversity. For everyone who connected with and supported our “small but mighty school” in such a variety of ways—you are an inspiration to me and vital to the continued success of Japhet School.

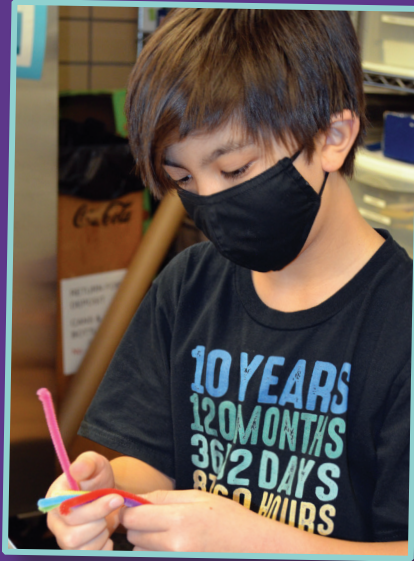
*With a very grateful heart,
Kerri G. Vizena
Head of School*



CLASSROOM WINDOWS



Preschool's Miss Carrie during Dress as a Book Character Day!



A 4th-grader prepares a crystal science experiment.



Middle Class teacher Christine Pray holds a crystallized rainbow!



An 8th-grader shares her 'smeyes' in art class!



A Preschooler works on his fine-motor skills with a craft.



A Preschooler shows her favorite book character: Peppa!



A 6th-grader dissects a real owl pellet in science class.



A Kindergarten student draws in art class with joy.



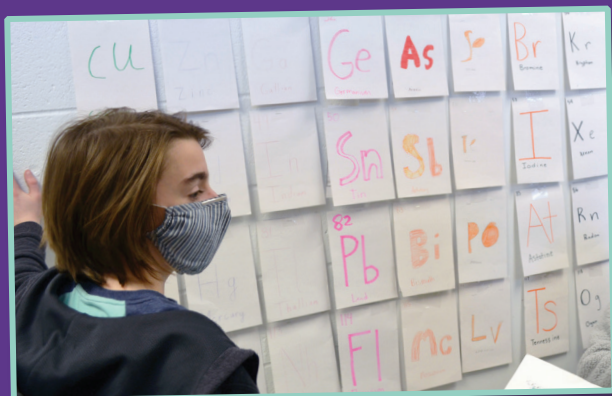
This 2nd-grader is Pete the Cat for Book Character Day!



A 1st-grader peruses and chooses in our annual book fair.



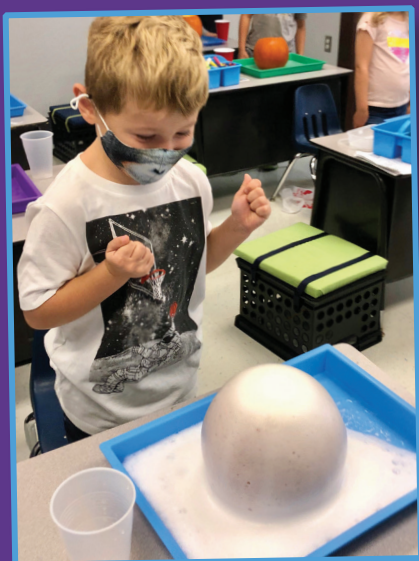
A 1st-grader shows a rainforest bird she learned about.



This 7th-grader demonstrates a jumbo Periodic Table!



Preschoolers gather around Miss Carrie and an experiment.



This 'Exploding Pumpkin' experiment captivates Kindergarten!



We created 50 bouquets of paper flowers for senior neighbors.



Preschool is the perfect place to create and get messy!

Sharon and Jay Schmitt



Sharon and Jay Schmitt have been long-time donors and friends of Japhet School. In May 2020 Jay passed on, and he is deeply missed by all who knew him. Our next golf outing, which we hope to have in August, will be named after Jay to honor him and his many years of service to Japhet as a trustee and board treasurer. An avid golfer, Jay was always the first to reserve his foursome and recruit one or two more teams! His wife Sharon spent

some time with us to share more about the 'whole person' of Jay Schmitt and why the couple has been dedicated to Japhet School for more than 25 years.

Jay and Sharon have four children: two sons and two daughters. They have 12 grandchildren and another on the way. While they had heard of Japhet School, their daughter Julie Haugan taught here in the 1990s, and that is when they realized the importance of the school's mission and decided to become involved. First they were donors, then Jay became a trustee—a position he held until he passed, taking only one year off in between several 6-year terms to follow Japhet's by-laws.

"Jay deeply valued education," said Sharon. She explained that while they were raising their four children, Jay worked for Detroit Edison in the daytime, went to Wayne State University at night, and spent the weekends studying to get two master's degrees in electrical engineering and in finance. "He was of little help at home during those early days!" Sharon shared with a laugh. "But his education became a resource he drew upon to help others, and when he saw Julie working for Japhet and the character qualities she also taught, that really spoke to him. We saw a place where children were being educated not only academically but also ethically and morally. We decided we wanted to be involved and support Japhet School in any way we could."

Helping to ensure the financial health of Japhet School was Jay's priority. Not only have he and Sharon donated generously, Jay also shared his expertise as a volunteer

member of our Finance Committee, Development Committee, and Investment Oversight Committee. A stalwart, conservative, and frugal person, Jay's passion for thrift is remembered by all who served alongside him.

Sharon joined Jay in service to Japhet School by hosting board retreats and cooking for Japhet School volunteers who visited their home. "These people deserve something special," Jay would tell me, and I was happy to provide," Sharon said.

Sharon supported home life and worked as a paraprofessional for Waterford Public Schools for 22 years, and Jay worked for Detroit Edison for 38 years. After 'retiring' from Detroit Edison he continued to work for DE as a contractor, then he worked another three years for a startup, the Michigan Electric Transmission Company. After his work with METC Jay fully retired.

Japhet School wasn't Jay's only charitable endeavor as a retiree—far from it. He also served his church, and he served in prison ministry, writing to incarcerated men and visiting prisons in Marquette, Saginaw, and Midland. He also met with former prisoners upon their release and continued to give them support financially and emotionally. "We embraced them," said Sharon. "So many of these young men have nobody ... absolutely nobody. While in prison some of them wouldn't even be given a toothbrush." She and Jay ensured they had what they needed and more. "We let them know they are loved and cared for," Sharon said, and it is a ministry that she plans to continue on her own.

Deciding to name our next Fore the Kids Golf Outing after Jay was an easy decision. Jay was a golfing enthusiast, and uniquely athletic as a person permanently affected by polio in his left leg. "When he was young he was told he would never participate in sports or even climb stairs," said Sharon, "but he played softball and was the pitcher. He played hockey and was the goalie. He learned to water ski on one ski. And in high school he learned to golf." It's a sport he enjoyed for the rest of his life.

Please stay tuned for more information on our next **Jay Schmitt Fore the Kids** annual golf outing planned for August. Details will be shared with the community via email and social media. We hope to have a big turnout to honor Jay and support Japhet School!

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A L U M N I N E W S



Ava Smith, XJ'16: Mercy High School (Juried awards in sculpture and mixed media arts, scholarships to Loyola University Chicago and Wayne State University). Deferred enrollment to fall 2021. She plans to major in graphic design or visual arts.

Bailey Blake J'16: Detroit Country Day High School (Cum Laude, The Performing Arts Conservatory Designation in Film Award, Tech Crew for productions of *Hairspray* and *The Glass Menagerie*, camera operator for school's plays). Bailey is currently studying film and literature at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, NY.



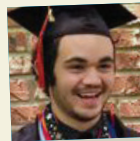
Kerrigan Carr J'16: Cranbrook Upper School (Captain girls' rowing team, swim team, Cranbrook Wilderness Expedition, Cranbrook Coach's Award, Bloomfield Hills Optimist Club's award for contributions to the community). Kerrigan is attending the University of Oregon and is an English major with interests in political science and German history.



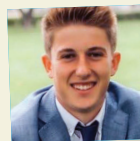
Kavya Desai XJ'16: Bloomfield Hills High School (Magna Cum Laude, tennis team, Eagle Scout achieved on his 18th birthday). Ohio Northern University; undeclared major but leaning toward Sports Management in the Business School. Kavya is playing collegiate tennis for ONU.



Conor Edwards J'16: Cranbrook Upper School (Arthur Neville Kirk Award for Excellence in Jewelry and Metalsmithing, Hockey Managers Award for managing all four years of the Cranbrook Varsity Hockey team). Wayne State University, majoring in Sports Management and possibly minoring in History.



Kaiah Foydel XJ'16: Winter Park High School, Winter Park, FL (IB Program with Honors in Math, Science, and Art, rowed crew and competed nationally). Kaiah is an avid motorcycle enthusiast and artist. Florida State University, majoring in Engineering and Mathematics.



Noah Gappy, XJ'16: Shrine High School (Kyros Retreat Leader, National Catholic Youth Conference, Varsity basketball and captain—Catholic League champions, varsity soccer and captain—district and Catholic League champions, Goliards varsity choir—Division 1 District and State awards, Drama and Hootenanny participant). Noah is attending Western Michigan University where he is considering a major in Business with a concentration in Sports Management.



Maddy Grunow J'16: Marian High School (Marian 1st Honors, Marian Senior Class Citizenship Award, National Honors Society, Spanish Honors Society (SHS), Marian Modern Languages Spanish Medal of Honor, Art Honors Society, Friends of the Earth, founding member of Diversity Matters Club). As a member of SHS, Maddy had the opportunity to visit several Spanish-speaking schools in the Detroit area where the group mentored students, brought them donated winter gear and school supplies, and played games and did crafts with the children. In the Diversity Matters Club, she had the opportunity to help create a safer school environment for all students at Marian. Maddy is currently attending Wayne State University where she plans to major in Graphic Design with a minor in Spanish.

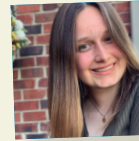


Nate Hodgson J'16: University Liggett School (Summa Cum Laude & Cum Laude Society, Faculty's Choice Award for academics, D. Eugene Overton Award in Chemistry, Eva McKinley West English Prize, Linguist Award, Katherine Ogden Book Award, Harvard Book Award, TiJuan Kidd Prize, FIRST Robotics team and mechanical/drive team leader, track team, competitive swimming, co-founder of the school's Strategy Board Games Club). University of Michigan majoring in Chemical Engineering and may take on a second major in Romance Languages and Literature. He is a member of the UM Solar Car Team in the Composite Materials subteam. Nate was awarded the Stamps Scholarship covering all of the costs of attendance for four years.

Christopher Isabella XJ'16: Shrine High School (Concert Band communication Officer, captain of the drumline, pep band, pit orchestra, string ensemble, Knightsmen Choir, Tech Crew, school newspaper. Christopher plays the piano, percussion, stand-up bass, and guitar.) College for Creative Studies majoring in Digital Film.

Jeannie Lam J'16: International Academy Macomb (Magna cum Laude, French Honors Society Secretary and Treasurer, National Honors Society, Departmental Choir Award, Higher Level courses in French, Biology and Music, Member and Treasurer of the Black Student Association, Member of Build-On—a student organization that cooks meals for the unhoused, tutors and mentors children, and cleans up vacant lots and homes—JV Swim, JV Softball, and Jeannie also worked part-time as a receptionist at a local business). Jeannie is attending the Michigan State University Honors College and working toward her degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology with a minor in Cognitive Science. She plans to receive her EMT certification this summer and become a Resident Assistant in fall of 2021. Jeannie is also planning for and working toward a study abroad program

at Yonsei University in Seoul, South Korea in spring of 2022.



Emily Minchington XJ'16: Troy Athens High School (Summa Cum Laude, National Honor Society, member Health Occupation Students of America where she competed at local/regional/state levels, Science Olympiad. Founder of Hospital Heroes, a student service organization that creates and delivers craft packages to hospitalized children.) University of Michigan, planning to major in Microbiology.

Alex Schestag XJ'16: Wilton High School, Wilton, CT. (National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society, National Merit Commended Scholar, recipient AAPPL Seal of Bilingualism for Spanish). University of Michigan, School of Kinesiology, planning to major in Sports Management. Alex and his family moved to Connecticut after his 4th grade year, but have recently returned to Michigan and now live in Grand Rapids.

Gretchen "Donnie" Wilber J'16: Bloomfield Hills High School (dual enrollment with College for Creative Studies, recognized by her art teacher who said, "She has become the best digital sculpting student I have ever had the privilege of teaching.") She is attending the College for Creative Studies as a scholarship recipient pursuing Entertainment Art, and she plans to become a character design artist or animator. Donnie is currently working in the events department at the Detroit Zoo.

COLLEGE



Gillian Demeter J'11: Wayne State University, Summa Cum Laude, Bachelor of Arts double major in Anthropology and Slavic Studies with a concentration in Polish. Gillian has continued at Wayne State working on her Masters in Library and Information Science, majoring in Library Services. She has worked at the Huntington Woods library for several years.

Callista Dendler XJ'12: University of Arkansas, Bachelor of Arts double major in Art History and Studio Arts with a focus on Ceramics. Interned at the Crystal Bridges Museum and hopes to take that experience to the career level as a museum curator.



Shaun Isaac Hayes J'11: Michigan State University, Bachelor of Arts in Creative Advertising with an additional major of Management Advertising, Dean's List. Now living in Chicago where he is an Assistant Account Executive for FCB Chicago, a global marketing and advertising agency.

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COLLEGE *CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7*

Katy Robinson J'07: Northern Michigan University, Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science with a Water Resources concentration and a minor in Environmental Psychology. Katy is living in Big Rapids, MI, and has just started a job as a soil conservationist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the National Resource Conservation Dept. She works with landowners on implementing conservation practices and practices offered by the agency. She is passionate about the environment and educating the public about what we can do to preserve it.

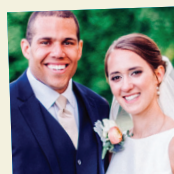
GRADUATE DEGREE



Corey Robinson J'04: Chatham University, Pittsburgh, PA, Master of Sustainability (Recipient of the \$20,000 Eden Hall Fellowship, planned and hosted a national

conference focused on access to sustainability and healthy food systems via beekeeping, ADA accessible gardens, food security, creating inclusive spaces, and more.) Recently began work as the Mobility Specialist at the University of Pittsburgh where she is working on sustainable, multi-modal transportation in the Pittsburgh area as well as on campus.

WEDDINGS



Marshall McCurties XJ'07: Marshall and Ann Sarkisian were married in the summer of 2020 in Ann's hometown of Valparaiso, IN. They are currently living in the St.

Louis, MO, area where Marshall teaches middle and high school history at an area independent school. He has been instrumental in integrating character

education into the curriculum there, something that remains very important to him from his Japhet days. Marshall also coaches football, tennis, and lacrosse and is an advisor and mentor on campus and recently completed his Master's Degree from Columbia University in Private School Leadership. Ann works at Washington University and is completing her MBA there as well. Marshall graduated from Principia College with an education degree in 2015. While there he was a member of the national championship rugby team and had the opportunity to study abroad in Tibet, Trinidad, and Switzerland. He has great memories of his Japhet days and the activities and people who influenced his life.



Sarah Winston (née Poche) XJ'06: Sarah and Chris Winston were married in their backyard on August 29, 2020 surrounded by parents and siblings. Sarah says that after

months of doing home renovations and improvements, holding their wedding at home made for a wonderfully relaxed and casual day. Sarah also recently graduated Oakland University in its Accelerated Second Degree Nursing Program. Currently caring for patients at Beaumont Grosse Pointe as a critical care step-down nurse, Sarah plans to go back to school to become a clinical instructor or professor.

FUTURE JAPHET PRESCHOOLERS



Steven Andersen XJ'98 and Amanda Sagert Andersen are thrilled to welcome Sage Harlow Andersen to their family. This sweet addition to the Andersen family was born in January 2021 weighing in at 5 pounds, 5 ounces. Amanda and Steven report that big brothers Brody and Ryder adore their

baby sister and are being a big help to mom. Grandma Janet Andersen, Japhet's Primary Class teacher, now has eight grandkids.



Sarah Dewey J'00 and Jason Klosterman proudly announce the arrival of their daughter Marilyn Addison in November 2020.

Marilyn weighed in at 6 pounds, 7 ounces and was 20 inches in length. She is named after Sarah's late grandmother Marilyn Dewey. Sarah got a start baking cookies in Life Skills class and has turned that into a business that allows her to be at home with Marilyn. Sarah's mom Carol does the baking and Sarah does the decorating. They specialize in custom orders for special events, holiday sales, pop-up shops at local retailers and cookie baking classes. Sarah's cookies are spectacular! You can check them out at mycoastalcookies.com (Sarah does not yet ship out of state).

Do you have alumni news to share?

Please send news and photos to Robin Pospisil, Admissions Director at robin.pospisil@japhetschool.org