



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Japhet School to open STEM lab and enhanced learning opportunities for 3rd through 8th graders

CLAWSON, Mich., June 10, 2021 -- Japhet School students will see some exciting changes when they come back for the 2021-2022 school year, thanks in part to a large grant the school received in support of a new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) lab that will bolster Japhet School's middle school science program. A larger learning space is also being arranged for next year's 5th- through 8th-graders, and will include tools and materials to broaden the exploration of physical, life, and earth sciences. The enhanced classroom supports greater opportunity for long-term, project-based units of study in STEM, as well as Global Studies and Readers' and Writers' Workshops.

The middle school is also moving to a model of Partnership Teaching for the coming school year, which allows for a greater level of flexibility, enhancing the multiple modes of education that are currently present in other Japhet classrooms. Depending on the lessons, students can gather together as a large group to infuse a conversation with ideas and energy or break out into smaller, more dynamic groups to support different needs, abilities, or areas of interest. It allows students to feel there are free perspectives and possibilities with each new iteration. This change will support an increased focus on project-based learning and elevate the focus on student-centered curriculum.

"Our middle school environment provides a rich experience for students where they explore concepts in-depth," said Kerri Vizena, head of school, Japhet School. For example, in language arts Japhet's middle-schoolers write, edit, and design an all-school student newspaper. In science, students recently had a virtual face-to-face with avionics engineer Kevin Pratt of the Blue Origin space program. Students spent the year building their knowledge of earth and space science, along with concepts relating to hydroponics and environmental impact, in preparation for designing their own space communities. They were excited to have a chance to discuss their ideas with an expert in the field.

Japhet School's middle schoolers also lead the school's service endeavors. Before COVID, every middle school student had the charge to educate the rest of the student body about a local nonprofit organization, and arranged service learning field trips. One field trip took elementary and middle-schoolers to Forgotten Harvest with faculty, where they spent several hours preparing donated food for distribution.

"Every school year brings a multitude of opportunities for students to learn and grow. And this year was no exception! It was a year of finding alternate approaches to teaching and learning and to sharpen our skills while communicating virtually," said Vizena. "We found strength in our mission -- combining character education with a strong academic program -- and applied it to the challenges of the pandemic. It's time now to look to the future and I'm excited to step into the 2021-2022 school year with joy and enthusiasm for the many learning opportunities that are just around the corner."

Japhet School transitions to full distance learning in two days

Japhet School called on one of its character qualities, initiative, and innovative thinking when the pandemic closed all Michigan schools last March. In just two days, Japhet School transitioned to a full distance learning program. Then in September it opened its doors to in-person learning with a lengthy list of safety protocols, and Japhet stayed open all year with just two temporary exceptions due to a student diagnosis. All year long, students went into school without any escort into the building from parents. Parents -- some of them first-time Japhet parents -- trusted their children would be safe. And faculty welcomed their students, trusting parents that children would not come into school exhibiting any signs of illness. "The concept of reciprocal trust was especially felt this year," said Vizena.

Since its founding in 1973, Japhet School has always been a small and unassuming school, providing a peaceful educational environment for students. An independent school for children in Preschool through 8th grade, Japhet School's mission is centered on ethics: it "nurtures and prepares each child for life by integrating character education with a strong academic program." It's co-ed and non-religious. Families pay tuition to attend.

Japhet School has limited enrollment availability for the 2021/2022 school year for grades 3 through 8. To inquire, visit www.japhetschool.org.

About Japhet School:

Founded in 1973, Japhet School is an independent school, serving children in the metropolitan Detroit area in preschool through eighth grade. Its mission is to nurture and prepare each child for life by integrating character education with a strong academic program. The school provides small classes of fewer than 20 students in each, which enables teachers to challenge students with academic material that is appropriate for their intellectual readiness, regardless of age or grade. Integrated with strong academics is Japhet School's national award-winning character education curriculum, which builds a peaceful community within the school. The school's public speaking curriculum gives graduates confidence in leadership roles. Japhet is a National School of Character: it was the first school in Michigan -- and the first independent school in the country -- to receive this award. To learn more about Japhet, visit japhetschool.org.

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