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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Area High School Receives Character Education Grant
Program Shows Measurable Results

HOWELL, MICHIGAN — Kensington Woods High School (KWHS) has been awarded a two-year grant from the Michigan Department of Education Charter School Grant Program. The monies, \$174,770 for 2006-07 and an estimated \$168,323 for 2007-08, will assist Kensington Woods to continue building upon its established character education program, Smart Character Choices. The grant will also allow Kensington staff and students to teach the foundations of its program to three other charter schools.

Now in its fourth year, Smart Character Choices was researched and developed by CSPartners, Kensington's educational service provider, through the Federal Partnership in Character Education program. "Essentially, Smart Character Choices combines character education with academic content, while maintaining clear operating procedures and policies for the classroom and the school," says KWHS principal Jim Perry. "With our student body coming from ten different districts, we felt it was important to develop clear and consistent standards."

Results of the Smart Character Choices program at Kensington Woods have been impressive. Through an annual KWHS survey analyzed by the University of Minnesota, parents are asked if they feel their child is receiving an excellent education at the school. The first year Smart Character was implemented, KWHS parents who responded agreed 82% of the time; by the fourth year, KWHS parents agreed 100% of the time that their child was receiving an excellent education at Kensington Woods. Staff satisfaction grew and awareness of positive school climate

increased as well. Significantly, the University of Minnesota control group schools evaluated showed no improvement, and in some cases a decline in the same areas. In addition, the KWHS program reaped an academic bonus as well: MEAP scores in all subjects grew 13-30% between 2002 and 2005.

The four-part program emphasizes key character elements of kindness, optimism, positive interactions, responsibility, respect, and work ethic. Its implementation includes: intensive professional development for teachers, administrators and support staff; student training using the internal control model developed by Kensington Woods in conjunction with Jon Erwin of the William Glasser Institute; full integration of character education throughout the school; and use of real world classroom and school issues to help students learn, and then apply, important social protocols and character education.

A central component of Smart Character Choices is the use of American History curriculum to illustrate individuals and events that shaped the country and its core democratic values. All lessons are aligned with the Michigan Curriculum Framework and are available for all grades, from elementary through high school. Trained Kensington Woods' staff and students will share over 120 American History lessons and support materials with three other charter schools, and will help coordinate a character-based curriculum for each focused on individual school needs.

Learn more about Kensington Woods High School at the **Winter Open House on Wednesday, January 17th from 4-7pm**. The school is located on the campus of Cleary University at 3700 Cleary Drive, Howell, Michigan 48843. For further information about the character education program or the open house, contact Jim Perry at **517-545-0828** or via email at **info@kensingtonwoodshs.com**.

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Kensington Woods High School is a college preparatory, tuition-free, state-funded high school providing accredited high school diplomas.

Kensington Woods High School is managed by CS Partners, an educational service provider based in Howell. CS Partners uses professional educators and administrators, plus research-tested methods and structures to oversee school management. Their services include, but are not limited to, day-to-day operations, curriculum development, staff training, marketing, grant writing, staff training, and curriculum development.