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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Kensington Woods High Schools  
Hosts Memorable Graduation Ceremony**  
*Plans for Class of 2012 Underway*

HOWELL, MICHIGAN — Kensington Woods High School (KWHS) hosted its 2008 graduation ceremonies on Friday, June 6, 2008, at Brighton Center for Performing Arts.

Of the 53 graduates, 80% of Kensington's 2008 class is heading to college, higher than the national average. These grads will pursue studies including engineering, business, veterinary sciences, forensic science, education, psychology, information technology, law enforcement, library science, and interior design.

Scott Schmitt, KWHS Valedictorian, is planning to attend Michigan Technological University to study electrical engineering. Eventually, he will be an aerospace engineer. At the graduation ceremony, Schmitt addressed his classmates about his Kensington Woods experience. "I value the balance of independence and guidance at KWHS," he explained, "I had opportunities I'd never thought I'd have in high school and I was allowed enough freedom to explore some of my ideas, but I also had the guidance from the faculty to make those explorations a success," he added. "We (KWHS class of 2008) are well prepared to be independent thinkers and to take on the unique challenges that now face our generation."

The graduates were also addressed by C. Leslie Charles, a critically acclaimed author and speaker.

Charles has appeared on CNN, CBS, NBC, ABC, FOX, MSNBC, PAX, A & E, and more. In addition to guest spots on national and local radio shows, she's been featured in *Redbook*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Woman's Day*, a *USA Today* cover story, and *Parade* to name a few. Her books include *Why Is Everyone So Cranky?* and her newest book *Bless Your Stress: It Means You're Still Alive!*

Charles' keynote address was wrapped around her "her organic principles...four ideas to help you move forward." She summarized: "1. Take root where you land, 2. Seek nourishment and grow, 3. Weather the storms, 4. Find your niche and fill it." The speech maintained a current Kensington Woods focus on transitions.

Building upon on an already successful educational structure, Kensington Woods faculty and staff are working throughout the summer to ease the often, daunting transition between 8th and 9th grades. Research shows that the increased rigors and expectations of high school can make freshman year fraught with problems. In fact, ninth grade is the most critical year in terms of predicting future success.

"We are really excited about our freshman seminar to help smooth the transition from middle school," says Theresa Merrill, KWHS guidance counselor. "The class of 2012 will develop habits necessary for personal responsibility, and gain the intellectual skills that will produce confident, capable, and caring adults." Specifically, the KWHS seminar will combine the foundations of social studies and literature that will prepare students for the more complex reading that is required in high school. "This will broaden their worldviews and expand their own beliefs."

The Association for Supervision in Curriculum Development (ASCD) stresses that the "whole child" approach to education is especially significant for incoming freshman. "When we meet the emotional, social, and intellectual needs of our students, they rather naturally become stronger students by every measure, including grade point averages and ACT and SAT scores," says Laura Moellering, KWHS director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

For further information about Kensington Woods High School visit [kensingtonwoodshs.com](http://kensingtonwoodshs.com), or contact Principal Jim Perry at 517-545-0828 or via email at [info@kensingtonwoodshs.com](mailto:info@kensingtonwoodshs.com). Kensington Woods is located on the campus of Cleary University at 3700 Cleary Drive, Howell, Michigan 48843.

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