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Heathwood Hall fourth graders place second in nation in WordMasters Challenge

(Columbia, S.C.) – June 2, 2008 – A team of students representing Heathwood Hall Episcopal School recently won highest honors in the WordMasters Challenge – a national analogy competition entered by more than 230,000 annually. Heathwood Hall's fourth graders placed **second in the nation** in the year-end cumulative standings among 772 school teams participating at that level and division.

Two Heathwood Hall students, Jennifer Gee and Brandon Hill, won highest honors for year-long achievement. Both earned perfect scores in all three of the year's meets and were among the seven highest-ranked fourth graders in the country in the year-end standings.

"We are so proud that our students achieved this honor in WordMasters," said Mary Ann Hoffman, head of Heathwood Hall's Lower School. "Our students enjoy the challenge, which helps them to learn to think analytically and metaphorically, and we appreciate our faculty who work to prepare them for it."

Third and fourth grade teachers served as coaches and Marsie O'Brien-Pulford served as coordinator. The fourth graders competed in the difficult Blue Division.

In addition, six students were among the 119 nationwide who earned perfect scores in the year's final meet in April, winning highest honors for individual achievement: Jennifer Gee, Elise Harvey, Brandon Hill, Owen Lord, Annie McLeod and Jackson Yow.

Others who achieved outstanding results in the final meet included third graders Grayson Byrd, Jessica Fields, Parker Renton, Blake Sanford, Hayden Vandenberg, Elizabeth Jane Hancock, Aidan Powers, Isabelle Robinson and Matt Watford and fourth graders Maddison Acciardo, Maria Hackney, Rachel Shelley, David Williams, Lizzie Gilliam-Wrenn, Sarah Addy, Taylor Jo Bohnke-Rudis, Rachael Bates and Salma Geneidy.

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Administered for 21 years by a company based in Allendale, New Jersey, the WordMasters Challenge is dedicated to inspiring high achievement in American schools. The WordMasters Challenge is an exercise in critical thinking that first encourages students to become familiar with a set of interesting new words which are considerably more difficult than grade level, and then challenges them to use those words to complete analogies expressing various kinds of relationships. Though most vocabulary-boosting and analogy-solving activities have been created for high school students, the WordMasters materials have been specifically designed for younger students, in grades three through eight. They are particularly well-suited for able and interested children who rise to the challenge of learning new words and enjoy the logical puzzles posed by analogies.

Heathwood Hall Episcopal School offers a college preparatory program in Columbia, S.C. for nursery school through grade 12. For more information about Heathwood Hall, visit www.heathwood.org.

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