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## Press Release

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### Vermont Commons Student Recognized by National Merit Scholarship Program

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Vermont Commons School is pleased to announce that the National Merit Scholarship Program (NMSP) has recognized one of our 11th grade students, Jack Homer for scoring high marks on three Preliminary SAT / National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Tests last fall: critical reading, mathematics and writing skills. Jack is one of only 50,000 students in the entire United States to earn NMSP recognition this year. This represents the top 3.5% of the 1.4 million students who participated in the program last fall.

Jack's achievement comes as no surprise to the faculty and staff at Vermont Commons. "Jack's an extremely bright and motivated student," notes Sarah Soule, Director of Admissions and College Counseling at Vermont Commons. He's also a fun, well-rounded young man. Jack enjoys participating in ultimate Frisbee, volleyball and biking at Vermont Commons. Last fall he participated in a VCS Encounter Week that involved a 5-day bike trip around Lake Champlain. He is currently enrolled in a Research and Service class that connects VCS students with Bike Recycle Vermont, a Burlington non-profit that helps low-income Vermonters by providing participants with refurbished bikes and job-training skills.

What is rather surprising about Jack, however, is his daily commute. Because he lives in Plattsburgh, New York, Jack and his brother Will (a ninth grade student at Vermont Commons) must cross Lake Champlain to get to school. A typical school day involves waking up at 6:15 am, catching the ferry in Plattsburgh at 7:15 am, and arriving in Grand Isle at 7:35 am where the two boys carpool with another Vermont Commons family for the final leg of their commute -- a 30-mile drive to South Burlington. *What*



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*motivates Jack to make this journey every day?* “The fantastic faculty and the special friendships I’ve developed at Vermont Commons,” says Jack, “They make it all worthwhile.”

Jack also does *his* part to make this journey worthwhile for him and for his parents, Mary and John. Jack has been on the honor roll since he transferred to Vermont Commons as a ninth grade student in 2006. He has a cumulative GPA of 3.83 and was inducted into the National Honor Society in 2007. “My classes at Vermont Commons aren’t a chore,” explains Jack. “I’m especially enjoying my Global Studies and Literary Criticism classes, both of which involve lively class discussions that keep what we’re learning relevant.” Jack is especially interested in creative writing and is thrilled that the Language Arts program at Vermont Commons incorporates creative writing into classes at every grade level.

Last summer, Jack got a chance to explore his interest in creative writing when he attended the Oxford Experience, a summer program for high school students offered through Oxford University in England. He took courses in drawing and creative writing and was impressed that the teachers connected students with resources in the local community in and around Oxford. Jack excelled in both of his courses and received special recognition from his instructors by winning the 2007 Creative Writing Prize. He plans to pursue creative writing when he enters college in 2009. But first he must select a college or two.

Being recognized by NMSP, Jack is invited to name two colleges or universities to which he would like to be referred by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. Jack spent spring break last month visiting colleges including **Amherst, Emerson, Goucher, Sarah Lawrence, and University of Massachusetts**. He is most impressed with Emerson (in Boston) and Goucher (in Baltimore), but Jack and his family will explore other options before making a final decision for the NMSP.

The next step in this process comes in September when Jack and the other students recognized by the NMSP will learn if they have qualified as Semifinalists, getting them one step closer to qualifying for one of the 8,200 Merit Scholarships awarded each year by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. For more information about the National Merit Scholarship Program, please visit [www.nationalmerit.org](http://www.nationalmerit.org).

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**About Vermont Commons School:**

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Vermont Commons School is an independent day school for college-bound students in grades 7 – 12. The school offers a rigorous, college preparatory curriculum that includes a focus on community service and experiential education. The mission of the Vermont Commons School is to provide a vision of education that crosses traditional boundaries and develops ecological citizenship, with the goal of empowering students with the knowledge, character, skills, and moral vision necessary to become responsible, pro-active members of the world community. For more information, please visit [www.vermontcommons.org](http://www.vermontcommons.org).

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