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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hawthorne Valley School Senior is Finalist in two prestigious scholarship contests

GHENT, NY - MARCH 4, 2020: Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School (HVS) is proud to announce that Solomon Kaj Bergquist, a senior in the high school, has advanced to Finalist standing in the National Merit Scholarship Program of 2020, "by demonstrating through distinguished performance, high potential for future academic accomplishment." Bergquist was named as a Finalist from a pool of 16,000 Semifinalists across the country. He was also named as a Finalist in the US Presidential Scholars Program, one of 216 graduating high school students representing the State of New York in this national contest.

Selection of some 7,500 Merit Scholarship winners from the group of more than 15,000 Finalists is now in progress, with announcement of scholarship offers coming on a rolling basis from April through June.

In late March, the semi-finalists for the Presidential Scholars Program will be named with the final selection of 121 recipients announced in April.

Bergquist is honored to be named as a Finalist in both competitions. He hopes to attend either Harvard University or Yale University in the Fall.

"I'm leaning towards studying either classics or linguistics," he says. "What really interests me is what makes humans human. It's fascinating to see how language shapes civilizations and what connections you can see between cultures by looking at their shared linguistics."

Bergquist credits his Waldorf Education with helping him develop a sense of individuality while still remaining connected to the world around him.

"I've been able to begin discovering who I am and what I think rather than just align with other people's views," he says. "At the same time, the idea of educating head, heart, and hands, which is everywhere in Waldorf education, has not just taught me information but has shown me what to do with it and how my actions affect others and how I can impact change."

Abe Madey, HVS High School Science Teacher and Bergquist's advisor, says, "Working in classes with Solomon, it's been apparent that he is very capable of meeting expectations, but he goes beyond that

and exercises initiative which shows that he takes responsibility for his learning processes. That's an outcome that we hope for all our students."

The recipients of both the National Merit Scholarship and the US Presidential Scholars Program will be announced beginning in April.

For more information about Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School's interdisciplinary high school program, contact John Darby, Director of Admissions, at 518-672-7092 x111 or jdarby@hawthornevalley.org.

About the National Merit Scholarship

Established in 1955, National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) is an independent, not-for-profit organization that operates without government assistance. NMSC is exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and contributions to NMSC are tax deductible by the donor. NMSC conducts the National Merit® Scholarship Program, an annual academic competition for recognition and college undergraduate scholarships. Additionally, from 1965 to 2015, NMSC conducted the National Achievement® Scholarship Program, an academic competition for Black American high school students. NMSC's goals have remained constant since its inception: to identify and honor academically talented U.S. high school students, to stimulate increased support for their education, and to provide efficient and effective program management for organizations who wish to sponsor college undergraduate scholarships. For more information, visit <https://www.nationalmerit.org>.

About the US Presidential Scholars Program

The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program was established in 1964, by executive order of the President, to recognize and honor some of our nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. In 1979, the program was extended to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, creative and performing arts. In 2015, the program was again extended to recognize students who demonstrate ability and accomplishment in career and technical education fields. Each year, up to 161 students are named as Presidential Scholars, one of the nation's highest honors for high school students. For more information, visit <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/psp/index.html>.

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About Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School

Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School is a pre-K through grade 12 school situated on a 900-acre Biodynamic® farm in New York's scenic Columbia County. Hawthorne Valley's integrative Waldorf curriculum is designed to create a healthy and balanced learning environment where children build living connections to the natural world while cultivating social responsibility, personal excellence, and the practical capacities to meet the challenges of the future. Visit hawthornevalleyschool.org to learn more.

The school is part of Hawthorne Valley Association, a diverse nonprofit dedicated to social and cultural renewal through the integration of education, agriculture, and the arts. Hawthorne Valley Association's

campus includes the Waldorf school, a working Biodynamic farm, on-farm education programs, a full-line natural foods and grocery store, social, ecological, and cultural research groups, teacher training programs, and more. For additional information, please visit hawthornevalley.org.