

Why JA?

STEM Career Awareness

The Challenge

The growth in jobs requiring Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) skills continues at a significant rate, according to the **National Science Foundation**.¹ The Foundation notes that the greatest increase is in non-STEM careers that require STEM proficiencies. The boom in robotics and automation is increasing demand for professionals with STEM skills while eliminating jobs held by low-skilled employees, according to **MIT**.² As more industries face workforce shortages due to the lack of skilled candidates, many low or unskilled workers are going without jobs. At the same time, two-thirds of teens may be discouraged from pursuing STEM

careers due to a lack of role models, even when they are interested in STEM, according to another **MIT study**.³ **Other research** shows that early interest and awareness of STEM careers is critical for teens seeking out and successfully completing STEM courses.⁴

The Role of JA

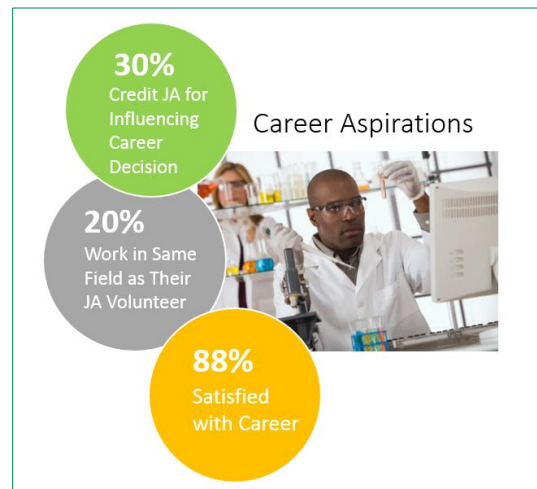
Work readiness is a key focus of Junior Achievement's proven programs. By bringing volunteer role models from the community into the classroom to share their experiences with students, JA introduces many young people to professions and career paths that they may not have been aware of, such as those in STEM.

JA programs promote 21st Century Skills, notably critical thinking, collaboration, creativity and communication, while helping students appreciate the importance of acquiring technical skills in math, science, coding, and composition. JA helps students appreciate the importance of higher education, whether it's a four-year degree or a technical certification. JA provides opportunities for STEM professionals to serve as role models to students and help them understand the benefit of math and science.

JA programs align with work readiness standards, including National Career Development Guidelines and Common Core State Standards.

Proof of Impact

A 2016-17 JA Alumni study found that nearly 1 in 3 former JA students credits Junior Achievement for providing them with an idea of what to pursue as a career as an adult. Additionally, 1 in 5 says that as an adult they have worked or are currently working in the same field as the JA volunteer they had as a school student, illustrating the impact JA volunteers have as role models.



¹ <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2015/nsb201510/nsb201510.pdf>

² <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/515926/how-technology-is-destroying-jobs/>

³ <http://news.mit.edu/2009/lemelson-teens-0107>

⁴ <https://ejournals.lib.vt.edu/JCTE/article/view/571/809>