

Of course I believe you should do Junior Achievement. Why? Well, from personal experience it was truly one of the most inspirational days of my life. The day as a whole felt surreal, it was almost as if the entire experience was within a play...

As I think back to the day of Junior Achievement, the first scene to come rushing back is walking to the classroom of the first grade students as the curtains opened. My heart pounded against my chest and each breath I took cut off quicker than a conductor's baton when indicating a rest to his orchestra. Every inch closer we got to the room, my anxiety levels heightened, and then... we stepped through the doors of the first grade classroom. I was blinded by bright smiles and the kindest eyes I have ever seen. The teacher, Ms. David, got the students to quiet down by stating a phrase that was all too familiar. "One, two, three," she called. The students echoed back, "eyes on me". Once the students had settled into their seats and had been familiarized with my partner, Elsie, and I, we nosedived into the lessons. The students were an absolute pleasure! They signed and decorated their Table Tents with ease, answered questions about their neighborhood within seconds, there was truly never a dull moment. What had truly stunned me was how quickly the students seemed to get attached to Elsie and I. By the time the students break came along we had an incredible time jamming out with all of them to the latest Kidz Bop songs and dance tutorials. Although I did not know all of the new songs, I got behind the classics such as "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes" and my all time favorite, "Wheels on the Bus". As the spectacular day was winding down, the students had to have their silent reading time. Now, I am a sucker for books, magazines, truly any type of reading you can name, so when I heard that there was time for silent reading I felt joy race through my head, shoulders, knees, and toes. I watched and admired the young scholars reading their short stories, and beamed with pride as I thought of them reading novels within the next few years. Soon enough, the school day was coming to its end, the curtains were closing and the children were leaving center stage. Then, one student named Francisco came up to me, handed over his Table Tent, and wrapped his tiny arms around me. I peered down at the Table Tent to see it read, "Always remember me", and that is when the final crescendo hit and the curtains officially closed.

Junior Achievement sparked so many interests in me. I never thought I would enjoy working with children so much! I discovered how incredible our city's young minds are, and I am so proud of each and every single one of the members of Ms. David's first grade class alongside the rest of their beautiful school who welcomed us high schoolers so warmly. On the other hand, I also realized how truly difficult teaching is! Now, my mother is a Chemistry teacher, and I am no stranger to how hard she works, but standing the entire day and keeping a class engaged is truly difficult work. In fact, it seemed to be more difficult than the actual lesson planning itself. Now, my eyes have truly been opened to how hard our teachers work, and how unfair it is that they are paid so little when in reality they have one of the toughest jobs out there. Our teachers truly hold the minds of the next generation in their hands, and it is their job to shape and mold the brain into one filled with knowledge that can be applicable to all aspects of our lives. I felt an inkling of how our teachers must feel daily following teaching those children. The sense of accomplishment I felt leaving the classroom of those brilliant young minds was unparalleled to anything I have ever felt before. I am also glad to say I believe the feelings I have for the students is reciprocated. I believe the students got to engage in an educational yet exhilarating day as they learned about their families, businesses, and neighborhoods through our lessons, and I know this is true because of the smiles that were super glued onto their faces.

So why should you do Junior Achievement? You do it for the experience of engaging with our youth, you do it to make a child's day, and you do it to learn how hard your teachers work for you. But most of all, you do it for the smile on the children's faces when they see you, a high school student, and you instantly become their role model. You do it for the student who is so touched by you that they give you their name tag and write, "Always remember me" on the back. You should do Junior Achievement, because truthfully, it can change lives.