Press Release
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Press Contact: Jennifer Boyle – jboyle@jatoday.org – 804.217.8855 x203

Junior Achievement of Central Virginia Celebrates 50 Years of Empowering Greater Richmond Youth

2016 marks the 50th anniversary of Junior Achievement of Central Virginia (JACV).

The organization, chartered in 1966, strives to ensure that students throughout Central Virginia are grounded in leadership and entrepreneurial principles, financial literacy and workforce readiness. Since its inception, JACV has provided economic and entrepreneurial education to more than 450,000 Central Virginia students.

“This anniversary celebrates the importance of economics education and gives JA a chance to thank our loyal volunteers, donors and supporters – some of whom have been with us since the very beginning,” expressed Daphne Swanson, president of JACV. “Without them, this milestone wouldn’t be possible. In today’s economy, JACV’s mission is more important than ever, and we look forward to another 50 years of inspiring Central Virginia’s young people to own their economic success.”

Simon Hodges, vice president of corporate strategy & financial analysis with Dominion Resources, and JACV board chair, echoes Daphne’s excitement, “For fifty years, JA has offered practical and crucial programming to students of all ages, all walks of life. The organization endures only through the continued support of individuals, foundations and businesses who believe in the essential need to prepare our young people for financial and career success.”

Through a volunteer network, JACV provides free in-school and after-school programs for students focusing on three key areas: work readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy. JACV offers over twenty programs for K-12th grade and serves 26,000 students throughout Central Virginia with the help of 2,000 volunteers. JACV programs are held in approximately 15 Central Virginia cities and counties. The model is simple: teachers and schools request programs and JACV recruits and trains volunteers to deliver them.

The organization’s premier program, JA Finance Park, includes a field trip element for middle and high school students that teaches them how to create a family budget based on hypothetical situations. JA Finance Park began as a mobile program – literally housed in a tractor trailer – visiting schools and community partners. In 2011, the mobile unit was installed at a fixed location at the organization’s Broad Street facility. In JA Finance Park, students assume "real-life" personas, and develop a budget that includes expenditures for housing, savings, transportation, health care, utilities, education and much more. They recognize the impact of credit history on budget planning and purchasing options.
JACV will kick-off their 50th anniversary with a January cocktail reception honoring the organization’s past, present and future. Cheryl Miller, an anchor and reporter with WTTR/CBS 6 News, is JACV’s 50th Anniversary Chair. She knows first-hand the positive impact JA programs can have on students – she’s a JA alumna and participated in the JA Company Program as a high school student.

“I tell people all the time that my career in broadcasting is thanks to JA,” Cheryl says. In her second year with the program, The JA volunteer company sponsor was a radio station in her hometown of Rochester, New York. “Shortly after starting to produce our ‘product’, a weekly radio show,” Cheryl notes, “I was tapped to work part-time at the station. That led to a nine-year stint working behind the scenes learning every facet of the business and as an on-air announcer and DJ.” Cheryl also later served as an advisor at the radio station to up-and-coming JA students. Miller says through JA she learned a life skill, how to multi-task and gained self-confidence, business acumen and financial literacy. Cheryl proudly notes, “Had it not been for that opportunity taken to join JA all those years ago, I would have missed a lifetime of unique experiences, of making lifelong friends, of learning new skills and getting a major headstart on what has become an exciting, rewarding and successful broadcasting career.”

Daphne commented on the legacy of JA programs and former JA students, “We continuously run across adults who participated in JA programs when they were young. We love to hear from our alumni and learn how JA positively impacted their lives. We are pleased to have so many esteemed alumni in the Greater Richmond area – government leaders, CEOs, media personalities, etc. We even have a page on our website dedicated to alumni and would love to hear from many more as the year progresses.”

JACV has celebrations and events scheduled throughout the year to commemorate. February will focus on fundraising with restaurant and retail partners. March will offer a celebration through JACV’s Bowl for the Green. Since April is Financial Literacy Month, JACV will promote learning through a social media campaign. The Greater Richmond Business Hall of Fame presented by JACV will be celebrated in May. The 50th anniversary celebration will continue throughout the year with events and promotions focusing on teachers, volunteers, supporters and alumni, as well as on JA’s three pillars – entrepreneurship, work readiness and financial literacy.

The organization will also celebrate by giving back to their constituents by offering giveaways during an ongoing social promotion - 50 Weeks of Gratitude. One week for every year of operation, JACV will give away a $50 gift card from sponsors including First Capital Bank (now Park Sterling Bank), TowneBank, Bank of America and SunTrust. Promotions will run on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

If you would like to learn more about Junior Achievement of Central Virginia, please visit their website at www.JAtoday.org.

About Junior Achievement of Central Virginia
Junior Achievement (JA) is the world’s largest organization dedicated to inspiring and preparing young people to succeed in a global economy. Through a dedicated volunteer network, JA provides in-school and after-school programs for students that focus on three key content areas: work readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy. Junior Achievement impacts over 9 million children worldwide. Locally, JA serves over 26,000 students throughout Central Virginia. Visit www.jatoday.org for more information about our programs and impact.

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