NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
May 8, 2019

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Teen Girls’ Interest in STEM Careers Declines  
New Survey by Junior Achievement Asks Teens about Career and Job Goals

Milwaukee, Wisconsin – A new survey by Junior Achievement (JA) conducted by the research group Engine shows that only 9 percent of girls between ages of 13 and 17 are interested in careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). This is down from 11 percent from a similar survey in 2018. Teen boys’ interest in STEM careers increased slightly to 27 percent, up from 24 percent in 2018. The survey of 1,004 teens was conducted from April 16 to 21, 2019.

“The decline of interest in STEM careers is disappointing given how much emphasis is being placed on promoting STEM to girls,” said Michael Frohna, president of Junior Achievement of Wisconsin. “One element that may need to be emphasized more is ensuring that STEM professionals are serving as role models and working with girls in educational settings as part of these initiatives.”

A 2009 study from MIT indicates that young people are interested in STEM at an early age, but begin to lose interest as they become older due to a lack of interaction with mentors and role models in the STEM fields. A way Junior Achievement is addressing this is by bringing STEM professionals into classrooms to deliver the organization’s career-readiness programs. Junior Achievement (JA) also offers one-day STEM events at Wisconsin area businesses.

The next scheduled STEM event is the Innovation JAm on October 1 at Schneider in Green Bay. At this event, high school students will work in small teams using the latest in cloud-based technologies and design thinking to help solve a real-world business problem. Schneider and IBM business and technology professionals will mentor groups to help them prepare for a final presentation of their solution to a panel of executives. In spring of 2020, the annual JA Technical Careers Challenge will
be held at Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC) in Appleton. This event for middle school students provides a hands-on experience of different careers, such as health care and information technology. Students race against the clock with FVTC instructors and area business professionals to complete a career task for a chance at the challenge trophy.

Other findings from the survey include:

- 85 percent of teens say they know what kind of job they want after graduation, down slightly from 88 percent in 2018.
- While girls’ interest in STEM careers like engineering, robotics and computer science declined, their interest in careers in the medical and dental fields increased to 25 percent, up from 19 percent in 2018.
- Half of all teens (51%) expect to work this summer. However, more than two-thirds of 16- and 17-year-olds (69%) expect to have a summer job.
- Top summer jobs include retail (26%) and food service (26%). These are followed by outdoor work (17%) and babysitting/child care (14%). Very few (5%) anticipate working in an office over the summer.

Junior Achievement delivers programs focused on promoting work-readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy to students in grades K through 12. JA’s programs help teens better understand the connection between what they learn in school and how it will apply toward their future career goals. In 2018, Junior Achievement reached 153,765 students in Wisconsin.

**Methodology**

This report presents the findings of a Youth CARAVAN survey conducted by Engine among a sample of 1,004 13-17-year olds, comprising of 502 males and 502 females. This survey was live on April 16-21, 2019.

Respondents for this survey are selected from among those who have volunteered to participate in online surveys and polls. Because the sample is based on those who initially self-selected for participation, no estimates of sampling error can be calculated. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to multiple sources of error, including, but not limited to sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options.

**About Junior Achievement® (JA)**

Junior Achievement is the world's largest organization dedicated to giving young people the knowledge and skills they need to own their economic success, plan for their future, and make smart academic and economic choices. JA programs are delivered by corporate and community volunteers, and provide relevant, hands-on experiences that give students from kindergarten through high school knowledge and skills in financial literacy, work readiness and entrepreneurship. As a nonprofit organization, Junior Achievement reaches more than 4.8 students per year in 109 markets across the United States, with an additional 5.2 million students served by operations in 100 other countries worldwide. Locally, Junior Achievement has 12 area offices across Wisconsin and annually serves over 153,000 students with more than 9,000 volunteer mentors. For more information on Junior Achievement and their centennial year, visit wisconsin.ja.org.

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