

Heidi Urban is the Strategic Account Manager for Partner Ecosystems at Axis Communications. She is a Western New York native, growing up in Hamburg (Go Bulldogs!) and currently resides in North Tonawanda with husband Joe and daughter Emma



Q: How did you become involved with JA?

A: I was introduced to JA when I worked for the Buffalo Niagara Partnership over 15 years ago

Q: Why did you decide to get involved? Stay involved with JA?

A: I originally did it because they were looking for a need and a JA colleague had reached out to me to see if I could help out. Once I did, I fell in love with this. I stayed involved because I feel it delivers a great message to school aged children. A message that combines your interests, skills, and priorities and shows you a path to find a job or career that you can love.

Q: What were you nervous about before teaching? How did you overcome it?

A: I taught Sunday School for many years, so I was comfortable around that younger (elementary) school aged children. As I worked in middle or high school classrooms, I definitely had some nervousness. Knowing the material helped not be nervous so I was prepared for questions they might have. Also, I think some of what these students want is a real person that have experienced this and have applied these learning in their own life. I feel this resonates with kids and this is what I can offer.

Q: Do you have a JA memory that stands out?

A: The last class I did was amazing. These kids taught me a lot about the next generation coming into college and the workforce. I trust this generation is full of amazing young adults ready and willing to make a difference in the world.

Q: What advice would you give to a new JA volunteer?

A: You will love this! Try different age groups because they all have their own uniqueness. When you go into a class make sure you understand the lesson and the objective. Be prepared to change things on the fly. One of the most fun things is how much the kids want to know about you, so be prepared to apply this lesson to your own life.

Q: Why do you think it's important for students to have JA?

A: This curriculum and goals for the program are a life lesson. Skills they can carry with into life.

Q: What are any "side benefits" of participating with JA that you might see? (Either for yourself as a volunteer, or the students/teachers you have worked with; ie, student confidence).

A: For me, I travel a lot for work, so this helps me to stay connected to the Buffalo Niagara community. It has proven to me that there are a lot of amazing young adults that are on the heels of the workforce and will bloom into contributing adults to the economy. 😊