

Madison Elliott is originally from Allentown, PA. She went to college in Philadelphia at La Salle University and then after graduation moved to South Dakota for her first reporting job. There, she worked for an ABC affiliate. She was looking for jobs back east so she could be closer to family and found herself in Buffalo as a reporter for Spectrum News. While she didn't know a lot about the area when she moved here one year ago, "I've come to quickly love the area, the people and of course, the food!"



Q: How did you become involved with JA?

A: I first discovered JA through the company I work for, Spectrum News. They were participating in the JA Media Bowl Challenge and I was able to help represent the company. It was a lot of fun and I got to learn what the organization does!

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

A: I decided to get involved with JA because being new to the area, I was looking for a way to become active in the community. I volunteered teaching career skills to high school students and I remember what it was like being in their shoes, wanting to prepare for my future. I had a lot of help along the way and this allows me to pay it forward to the next generation.

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

A: Being that I am a reporter, people wouldn't think that I get nervous about public speaking. However it's a little different when it's just the camera versus a group of people! I was nervous to stand in front of the group of kids and guide them through a lesson, but I tried to make lessons a group discussion rather than just talking "at" the kids. That way it was a little less scary and it could get the kids a little more involved!

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

A: Not necessarily one memory, but the teacher I worked with stood out to me. I was paired with Joanne Siwula at International Prep. She was so kind and encouraging and made my first experience with JA a good one.

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

A: Don't be afraid to put the lesson book down and get creative with your own lessons!

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

A: It teaches them valuable life lessons. While there are many programs JA volunteers teach, I taught career skills and kids can never learn these skills too early. It can also introduce them to potential career paths and get them thinking about their futures sooner.

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: It's just a great organization to be involved with and you have the opportunity to make a direct and positive impact on a kid's future.