



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

JA Inspire

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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## **Junior Achievement's JA Inspire Helps Over 500 Middle School Students Discover WNY Career Options**

(Buffalo, NY) – On April 9<sup>th</sup>, over 100 volunteers from local business and community organizations dedicated their morning to engage with 500 Middle School students at the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center. Students from 13 Western New York schools had the opportunity to explore high-growth, high-demand careers and what it takes to attain (and keep!) those jobs through Junior Achievement's JA Inspire program.

JA Inspire is a response to a need. Local business leaders and school administrators reached out to JA to talk about workforce development because JA is seen as a bridge between business and education. Most students do not have access to learn and explore WNY industries. JA Inspire offers students the opportunity to learn about careers from industry representatives in time to begin planning for their high school course work and better prepare themselves for life after high school graduation. For businesses, higher education, and apprenticeship programs, this was an opportunity to engage with WNY's future workforce. The program was made up of soft skills student workshops presented by business community volunteers, a keynote address featuring Ram Ramanujam, GM Tonawanda Engine Plant Director, local business panel discussion on career planning and high demand jobs, and a Career Fair with 40 interactive stations representing a variety of career clusters.

General Motors Components Lockport and Tonawanda Engine Plant partnered to become the presenting sponsor of this program. "GM Tonawanda Engine welcomed the opportunity to be a sponsor of JA Inspire this year because engaging students today is one way we encourage the next generation workforce to pursue a STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) career pathway. Our industry relies on innovation and fresh thinking to remain relevant, competitive, and vibrant. The next generation workforce will have a lot of options, and this is an opportunity to show our future leaders that a career in manufacturing can be an exciting part of their future," said Ram Ramanujam, Plant Director at GM Tonawanda Engine.

"What students are learning in school is going to be important for them in high school and beyond in their careers. At JA Inspire, students have the opportunity to see a little bit of everything and we've designed a very diverse cross section of careers to explore" explained Laurie Mahoney, President of Junior Achievement of Western New York.

Mary Champoux, Assistant Principal at Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls, shared that “when her students returned to school, they wanted to share the videos of their role play in the workshop session and share all the "take-aways" they had in their bags, and listen to who went to a particular career station. I just sat back and relished the moment. The impact on my students was very notable and the comments were so positive.”

The event is not possible without program support from General Motors Tonawanda Engine plant and Lockport Components Holding plant who together partnered to be our Presenting Sponsor. Panel Sponsor: JPMorgan Chase, Workshop Sponsor: Praxair / Linde PLC, Coffee Station Sponsor: Bryant & Stratton College, and Student Sponsor: Citizens Bank.

For additional event details, visit <https://www.juniorachievement.org/web/ja-wny/ja-inspire>

### **About Junior Achievement of Western New York**

Junior Achievement is the world’s largest organization dedicated to educating students in kindergarten through 12th grade about financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and career & work readiness through experiential, hands-on programs. In the 2017-2018 school year, Junior Achievement of WNY enriched the lives of 15,751 students in 161 schools and community organizations throughout the eight counties of Western New York. JA’s success is due to its many generous supporters and more than 785 volunteers. For more information about Junior Achievement and how you can make a difference in a child’s life, visit our Web site at [www.jawny.org](http://www.jawny.org) , follow us on Twitter at @JAofWNY, or like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/jaofwny](http://www.facebook.com/jaofwny).

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