Junior Achievement™
of Eastern Iowa

2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

EMPOWERING **YOUTH**



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Junior Achievement™ of Eastern Iowa

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



At Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa, we believe in possibility. Every day, we see the incredible potential in young people as they connect classroom learning to the real world and begin to imagine what their futures can be. Our work is about more than lessons—it's about showing students that they have the power, confidence, and skills to build lives filled with opportunity.

The 2024–25 school year was one of growth, innovation, and impact. In the fall, we proudly launched 3DE™ by Junior Achievement in the College Community and Alburnett School Districts. Through this groundbreaking instructional model, ninth grade students are engaging in dynamic, real-world learning experiences that deepen critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills. Every freshman at Alburnett and 150 ninth graders at College Community began this journey, with new cohorts set to join each year. Already, students are discovering how education and business intersect—and what it means to take ownership of their futures.

Beyond 3DE™, our programs continue to empower students across the region. In 2024–25, we reached 37,301 students throughout Eastern Iowa, made possible by the dedication of 1,502 local volunteers. Each volunteer brings real-world experience into the classroom, helping students see how challenges can be overcome and success achieved. These meaningful connections prepare students to navigate the future with resilience and confidence.

We are deeply grateful for the volunteers, educators, businesses, and donors who share in this mission. Together, we are preparing the next generation of leaders, innovators, and community builders. With your support, we will continue to help young people dream bigger, see further, and believe that anything is possible.

Christine E. H. Landa
President

Junior Achievement™ of Eastern Iowa

EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

37,301
PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

262,5789
INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT HOURS

1,621
LEARNING EXPERIENCES

38
SCHOOL DISTRICTS



20,215
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



11,075
MIDDLE SCHOOL



3,887
HIGH SCHOOL



2,123
ILE
(INDEPENDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE)



11
WORKFORCE
(18-24 YEAR OLDS)



1,041
UNIQUE EDUCATORS

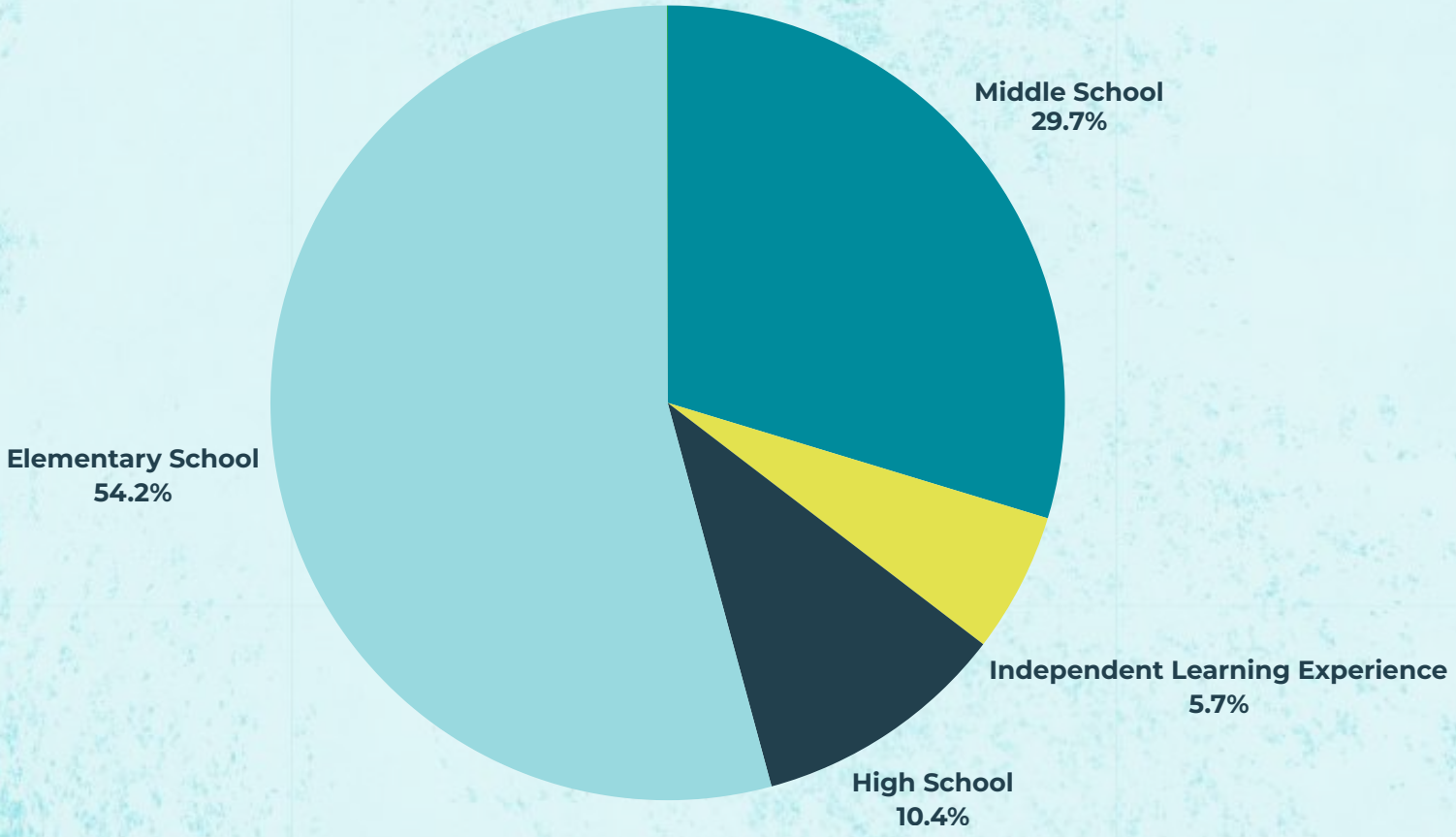


1,502
UNIQUE VOLUNTEERS

Junior Achievement™
of Eastern Iowa

2024-2025 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

37,301 Students



Junior Achievement™ of Eastern Iowa

IOWA: YEAR 5 LONGITUDINAL STUDY IMPACT REPORT

Longitudinal Study Initiative

Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa is conducting a longitudinal study in partnership with several local districts. During the 2024–2025 school year, data was collected from Alburnett and College Community Schools. The purpose of this study is to evaluate attitudinal shifts that occur for students as they participate in Junior Achievement (JA) program experiences.

To measure these shifts, nine outcome statements were developed. In collaboration with JA USA®, corresponding attitudinal questions were created and included in the program's pre- and post-evaluation process.

Below are a few highlights from the 2024–2025 results!

The JA continuum builds skills that last. By the time students completed three JA experiences, 92% felt confident in their ability to not just get hired, but to grow and succeed as employees.[1]

Eight out of ten JA students agree that JA volunteers help connect real-life experiences to what they learn in the classroom.[1]

Students with four years of cumulative JA experience demonstrated a 32% increase in confidence in managing their spending and saving habits.[1]

Participation in three JA experiences led to a 42% rise in students' interest in entrepreneurship.[1]



If you have specific questions about the study, please contact Carrie Pontzius (cpontzius@jaeasterniowa.org).

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THE IMPACT OF THE VOLUNTEER & PROGRAM KNOWLEDGE GAIN

18%

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

In just a few hours of volunteer engagement, Eastern Iowa students not only changed their mindset but also saw an 18% increase in knowledge areas such as financial literacy and career readiness.[1]

17%

FINANCIAL LITERACY

Volunteer-led JA financial literacy focused programs resulted in a 17% average improvement in students' money-smart skills.[1]

16%

WORK & CAREER READINESS

Following their volunteer-led program, Junior Achievement students in Eastern Iowa experienced a 16% increase in understanding how to thrive in the workforce.[1]

20%

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Through hands-on experiences like *JA BizTown® Mobile*, Eastern Iowa students gained a 20% increase in financial and work ready education.[1]



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JA WORK & CAREER READINESS PATHWAY

Junior Achievement helps young people explore what's possible in their lives. Through hands-on lessons in financial literacy, career readiness, and entrepreneurship, students connect classroom learning to real-world opportunities and build skills for life beyond school.

Elementary School

JA Ourselves®
JA Our Families®
JA Our Community®
JA Our City®
JA Our Region®
JA Our Nation®
JA BizTown® Mobile
JA More Than Money®
JA Career Speaker Series®

Middle School

JA Economics for Success®
JA It's My Future®
JA Tools for Success®
JA Career Speaker Series®
JA Inspire®
JA Excellence Through Ethics®
JA Connect Learning Pathways®

High School

JA Career Success®
JA Job Shadow®
JA Career Speaker Series®
JA Excellence Through Ethics®
JA Here to Career®
JA Connect Learning Pathways®
JA Inspire®







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JA WORK & CAREER READINESS PATHWAY



CAREER AWARENESS

Following *JA Career Inspire*®, 82% of students said they had a better awareness of the career opportunities available in their region.[2]

STEM

42% of students left *JA Career Inspire*® more interested in STEM careers. That's the power of exposure and inspiration![2]

CAREER AND EDUCATION

91% of students agreed the experience helped prepare them for college or the workplace. *(JA Finance Park® Mobile)*[3]



EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Following the JA program, 88% of Linn County Free and Reduced Lunch students agree that, during their JA program, they learned about jobs they hadn't known about before.[1]

EMPLOYABILITY

93% of students believe that their academic performance will affect their ability to have a career that provides financial security.[1]

> ***My favorite part about Junior Achievement was playing the board game my teacher made us play about getting and keeping a job.***
>
> **- St. Patrick's student**

Junior Achievement™ of Eastern Iowa

JA WORK & CAREER READINESS PATHWAY

As the result of the JA Work and Career Readiness Pathway approach, which complements similar coursework in financial literacy and entrepreneurship, our program alumni tell us that Junior Achievement played a significant role in increasing their educational attainment, professional development, and career satisfaction.



Part of our educational delivery includes engaging professionals from the local community as volunteers to deliver our learning experiences while sharing their work and career journeys with students. The combination of our volunteer delivery model and curriculum has been shown to inspire and prepare young people to find work and career success as adults.

Junior Achievement is part of the solution enabling students with career planning skills, providing opportunities for career exploration and development of transferable durable skills, and encouraging students to pursue careers they might not have otherwise considered.

Following three JA experiences, 92% of students reported increased confidence not only in their ability to get and keep a job but also to thrive as successful future employees.[1]

> ***JA will help me find a good job that fits my skills and interests. The course has given me many life skills that I will use throughout life and in the near future.***
>
> **- JA student**

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JA ENTREPRENEURSHIP PATHWAY

The JA Entrepreneurship Pathway inspires and equips young people with the skills and mindset to succeed as entrepreneurs. Through hands-on activities, mentorship, and real-world challenges, students learn to identify opportunities, build business plans, manage finances, and solve problems—fostering creativity, innovation, and resilience.

Elementary School

JA Ourselves®
JA Our Families®
JA Our Community®
JA Our City®
JA Our Region®
JA Our Nation®
JA BizTown® Mobile
JA More Than Money®



Middle School

JA Launch Lesson®
JA It's My Business!®
JA Company Program Pop-Up®



High School

JA Launch Lesson®
JA Company Program Pop-Up®
JA Be Entrepreneurial®
JA Entrepreneurial Mindset®
JA Connect Entrepreneurship®



Junior Achievement™ of Eastern Iowa

JA ENTREPRENEURSHIP PATHWAY



McKinley STEAM Academy Students Make a Sweet Impact

Sixth graders from McKinley STEAM Academy in the Cedar Rapids Community School District put their entrepreneurial skills into action through *JA Company Program® Pop-Up*. Guided by teacher Corbin Bundy and volunteer Paige Grimm of Shive-Hattery, students Daliyah, Minnie, and Lucy created and operated a lemonade stand outside Bruegger's Bagels—raising $134 for Last Hope Animal Rescue.

The students chose Last Hope Animal Rescue after learning about its mission to rescue and rehome animals, and were able to personally deliver their donation and meet one of the adoptable dogs, Kayla.

This hands-on experience empowered students to plan, market, and manage a business with a social purpose, connecting classroom learning to community impact.

Tomorrow's innovators are in the making. JA inspires creativity—76% of elementary students said they'd enjoy inventing new things after their JA experience.[4]

87% of JAEI students said their volunteer or instructor made the experience more engaging through personal storytelling.[4]



My favorite part about JA was learning about how to run a business and playing the learning games along with it.
- JA student

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JA FINANCIAL LITERACY PATHWAY

The JA Financial Literacy Pathway empowers young people to make informed money decisions. Through interactive lessons and real-life scenarios, students learn budgeting, saving, investing, credit, and debt management—building a strong foundation for financial goals, responsible money habits, and long-term security.

Elementary School

JA Ourselves®
JA Our Families®
JA Our Community®
JA Our City®
JA Our Region®
JA Our Nation®
JA BizTown® Mobile
JA More Than Money®

Middle School

JA Economics for Success®
JA Finance Park® Mobile
JA Global Marketplace®

High School

JA Personal Finance®
JA Financial Literacy®
JA Take Stock in Your Future®
JA Finance Park® Mobile Advanced
JA Economics®
JA Financial Capability 1 & 2®







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JA FINANCIAL LITERACY PATHWAY

FUTURE OUTLOOK

95% of students that particpated in *JA BizTown® Mobile* feel the choices they make about how they spend and save money will impact their life.[1]

FINANCES & EDUCATION

93% of students believe that their academic performance will affect their ability to have a career that providers financial security.[5]



DEBT MANAGEMENT

Thanks to the *JA More Than Money®* program, 64% more Eastern Iowa students now understand the concept of interest—a building block of financial literacy and smart money management.[6]

SPENDING & SAVING

After their Junior Achievement experience, 100% of Benton Community School District students believe their spending and saving choices impact their lives.[5]

FINANCIAL GOALS

After completing *JA Our City®*, 93% of students could identify the four choices you have with money: earn, save, spend, and donate.[7]

> [I enjoyed] Learning about how to save money, the problems that can when happen, and how to solve them.
>
> - JA student

Junior Achievement™ of Eastern Iowa

REIMAGINING EDUCATION: THE LAUNCH OF 3DE™ IN EASTERN IOWA

Alburnett Community School District and College Community School District launched 3DE™ by Junior Achievement in the fall of 2024. 3DE™ transforms traditional education by integrating case-based methodology and business collaboration into the classroom. Through real business challenges and cross-curricular problem-solving, students develop critical thinking, communication, and leadership skills—preparing them to thrive in school, work, and life. The launch of 3DE™ in Eastern Iowa represents a powerful step toward reimagining how education can inspire every student to see what's possible for their future.





"I have improved a lot because of 3DE™. I was not very social and I hated being in front of people because I had stage fright. But after giving presentations and working with different people, I wasn't scared when I started my 10th grade year."

- Prairie Student

"3DE™ is different than anything that I have done in the past. It brings me out of my comfort zone and makes me prepare in ways that I don't think I have before."

-Alburnett Student

3DE™ BY JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT

"3DE™ has encouraged me to look for innovative ideas to meet the framework of the program. Worksheets are not the most engaging way to solve problems, as it is not an authentic activity that looks like what they might do in the workforce."

-Prairie Teacher, Anonymous



Learn more about 3DE™ by Junior Achievement

THE 3DE IMPACT:
STUDENTS ENGAGED. OUTCOMES ELEVATED.

Alburnett High School

75 students

44% increase in students seeing the relevance of school



“Seeing what these students are capable of gives me hope for the future.”

- Jodee Reed, Business Coach, Mount Mercy University Faculty

"It is awesome when you can walk into a classroom and see kids that are excited. They are excited to learn and solve problems."

- Nikki Wilcox, Business Coach, TrueNorth Companies

“I am so impressed by all the different ideas. They are so innovative and it makes me pretty excited that this is our future workforce! “

- Jade Ploessl, Business Coach, GreenState Credit Union

Prairie High School

1st semester – 83 students
2nd semester – 132 students

35% increase in students feeling a sense of belonging

94% increase in students seeing the relevance of school

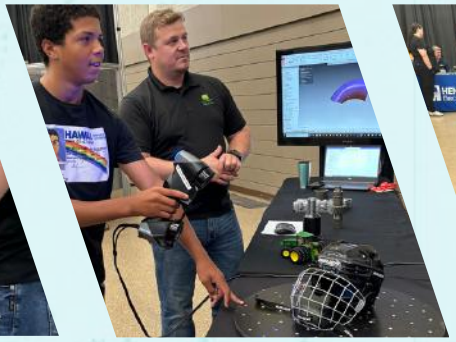
“I wasn't sure at first how 3DE™ would fit for the students that I work with, but after the first case I saw exactly how it fit. My students were interacting with their peers working on those important life skills of working in a team. Not only that, but I got to see how it benefited a student of mine who struggles to communicate effectively, he was able to get up in front of people he didn't know and help present his second case and did his part clearly and effectively.”

-Caiti Wyman
Special Education Teacher, Alburnett

3DE™
BY JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT

CONNECTING STUDENTS TO REAL-WORLD CAREERS






Fuel workforce development by guiding students through interactive career experiences that shape their futures—and yours.

Cedar Valley

- 1,288 students
- 10 schools
- 61 hands-on career activities
- 185 volunteers

"[I learned] lifelong learners earn more over their career lifespan because they keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date."

- Cedar Valley Student

Corridor

- 3,238 students
- 25 schools
- 65 hands-on career activities
- 288 volunteers

"I learned that there are so many diverse career paths to choose from and that getting a better education would help prepare me for these jobs."

- Corridor Student

70% of students indicated that they spoke to someone from each of the represented career pathways.[2]

Right side stat: 85% of students feel they understand the skills needed to pursue their field of interest.[2]

Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa

CAREER INSPIRE

HANDS ON. MINDS OPEN.



INSPIRING FUTURES THROUGH *JA CAREER EXPLORATION EVENTS*

JA Career Exploration Events give students the opportunity to connect classroom learning with real-world careers through hands-on experiences and personal interactions with professionals.



These events include Equipment Exploration Fairs, Career Speaker Days, and in-classroom speaker engagements, all designed to spark curiosity, build awareness of local career pathways, and inspire students to envision their future possibilities. By bringing community volunteers and industry representatives directly into schools, Junior Achievement helps students explore a wide range of professions and understand the skills needed for success in today's workforce.

2,761 total students
23 schools
84 volunteers





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of Eastern Iowa

TURNING CLASSROOM LESSONS INTO REAL-WORLD MONEY MANAGEMENT

The Busse Foundation *JA Finance Park® Mobile* is a hands-on, program that teaches middle, high school, and even college students essential financial literacy skills, such as budgeting, saving, and making informed financial decisions. Students engage in real-world simulations where they manage budgets, explore career options, and navigate the economy.





Engaging in real-life spending decisions during the simulation helped 93% of Cedar Rapids Community School District students grasp how budgeting works.[3]

93% of students agree their interactions with the JA volunteer in this program will have a positive impact on their personal development.[3]

1,270 total students
9 schools
95 Volunteers

"I thought it was great and the hands-on simulation was very beneficial to seeing a budget in action."

- JA Finance Park® Mobile Student

JA Junior Achievement™
Finance Park®

BRINGING THE ECONOMY TO LIFE FOR STUDENTS



JA BizTown® Mobile is an engaging, hands-on program that brings real-world business experiences directly to schools. This learning initiative allows students to explore the world of business and economics through interactive, real-world simulations. They take on roles in a mock community, managing businesses, making financial decisions, and learning essential life skills—all while gaining an understanding of how the economy works. It's a dynamic way to inspire and prepare the next generation of entrepreneurs and leaders!

Step by step, the JA continuum builds knowledge. After three JA programs — with *JA BizTown® Mobile* as the 3rd stop — 99% of students felt confident about how financial decisions affect their future.[5]

After their *JA BizTown® Mobile* experience, 8 out of 10 students walked away with a clear understanding of how taxes shape our economy.[1]





2,558 total student
14 schools
344 volunteers

JA BizTown®
Junior Achievement™ of Eastern Iowa

PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Cedar Rapids Area

Alburnett Community School District
Anamosa Community School District
Benton Community School District
Cedar Rapids Community School District
Cedar Rapids Private Schools
Center Point-Urbana Community School District
Central City Community School District
College Community School District
Linn-Mar Community School District
Lisbon Community School District
Marion Home Assistance Program
Marion Independent School District
Mount Vernon Community School District
Monticello Community School District
North Linn Community School District
Solon Community School District
Springville Community School District
Vinton-Shellsburg Community School District
Xavier Catholic School District

Cedar Valley Area

Aplington Parkersburg Community School District
Bosco Catholic School District
Cedar Valley Catholic School District
Cedar Valley Private Schools
Clear Lake Community School District
Columbus Catholic High
Denver Community School District
East Buchanan Community School District
Mason City Community School District
North Fayette Valley Community School District
Union Community School District
Wapsie Valley Community School District
Waterloo Community School District
Waverly-Shell Rock Community School District
West Union Community School District

Iowa City Area

HLV Community School District
Iowa City Community School District
Regina Catholic Schools



Junior Achievement™
of Eastern Iowa

Celebrating the Heart of JA: Our Volunteers Make the Difference

Volunteers bring JA's programs to life, transforming lessons into meaningful, hands-on experiences for students. Their dedication empowers the next generation, and we are profoundly thankful for their invaluable role in shaping brighter futures.

25 Years

Julie Hupp
Kory (Korlin) Kazimour

20 Years

Erin Kurt

15 Years

Dennis Jordan
Brenda Langenberg
Robert Lorenz
Michelle Ridder
Kristine Twaites
Jeff Wagner

10 Years

Amy Arthurs
Niki Davis
Jonathan Fasselius
Sylvia Hanson
Timothy Hill
Ryan Norton
Nancy Roth
Tami Skriver
Tammy Stinson
Cameron Wahl
Angela Weekley

She (the volunteer) had a great impact by including some personal stories about real life scenarios and telling us about real things that have happened throughout her life.

- JA Student

93% of students agree their interaction with a JA volunteer will have a positive impact on their personal development. That's mentorship in action!

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Celebrating the Heart of JA: Our Volunteers Make the Difference

5 Years

Kayla Buck
Melissa Charipar-Meyers
Nathan Coleson
Marci Dahl
Michael Goerdt
John Heinemann
Lyndsay Hobbs
Elizabeth Horan
Mallory Klindt
Mark Koch
Chris Kremer
Miranda Laaveg
Miranda Leonard (Ball)
Lisa McQuillen
Amanda Menhusen
Craig Montz
Nichole Moreau
Angie Morrison
Joe Nelson
Marilyn Pleasant
Timothy Reynolds
John Rodriguez
Chad Scarbrough
Pamela Schares
Miranda Schmid
Shelley Schroeder
Angela Schwendeman
Beth Simpson
Erin Swancutt
Laurel Thompson
Rachel Wayson
Dr. Doug Wheeler
Jim Williams

Behind every JA success story is a passionate volunteer!

Junior Achievement™ of Eastern Iowa

CELEBRATING LEADERS, INSPIRING FUTURES

In the fall, Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa celebrated exceptional business leaders whose vision, integrity, and leadership have left a lasting impact on Eastern Iowa. Nominated by community members and selected by an independent committee, these honorees exemplify excellence through:

Business Hall of Fame

Junior Achievement™ of Eastern Iowa

- IMPACT on their industry or organization
- INTEGRITY as ethical business leaders
- Commitment to bettering the COMMUNITY as a whole
- LEADERSHIP qualities that make them exemplary role models for others—especially young people
- ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT in starting or significantly advancing local businesses

Honorees were inducted into the Corridor Business Hall of Fame and the Cedar Valley Business Hall of Fame, both black-tie events featuring video tributes and student hosts who reflected JA's mission—to inspire young people to envision their own success. Proceeds from these celebrations support JA programs that empower students to achieve economic success and strengthen their communities.



Laureates - Dr. Vincent J. Reid, Brent R. Cobb, Jeff A. Pomeranz
Entrepreneur: Nate J. Kaeding

Presented by:

usbank

Attendees: 485
Students Impacted: 2,851



Laureates – Tom Poe, Dr. Jane Hasek, R. Hovey Brom
Entrepreneurs: Emsad & Edita Begic

Presented by:

First Interstate Bank

Attendees: 217
Students Impacted: 1,182

Total Gross Revenue: $276,080

JA STOCK MARKET CHALLENGE®
WHERE STUDENTS BECOME INVESTORS

Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa (JAEI) brought the excitement of Wall Street to the Olympic South Side Theater on April 24th for its annual *JA Stock Market Challenge®* . The event united 52 corporate teams and 27 student teams for a day filled with competitive trading, financial learning, and community impact—raising $113,513 to support JA's financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and career readiness programs across Eastern Iowa.



During the student session, high school teams participated in a fast-paced simulation that condensed 60 days of trading into just 60 minutes.



- 1st Place: Lone Tree High School
- 2nd Place: Springville High School
- 3rd Place: Kennedy High School

In the corporate challenge that followed, teams from local businesses competed for top honors in a high-energy trading environment.



- Highest Portfolio Value: United Iowa Financial, followed by CablePro Installations and RSM.
- Highest Return on Investment: RSM took the top spot, with Bosch Financial and Rinderknecht Associates completing the leaderboard.

"This event is a powerful example of what happens when education and industry come together," said Christine Landa, President of Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa. "Students get to experience the excitement and complexity of the stock market in a hands-on way, while professionals support the next generation through participation and sponsorship. It's a win for everyone."





This event was made possible through the generous support of the RSM US Foundation, the event's presenting sponsor, along with dedicated volunteers and community partners whose time and contributions drive its continued success.

Revenue Generated: $113,513
Students Sponsored: 1,658

Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa
STOCK MARKET Challenge

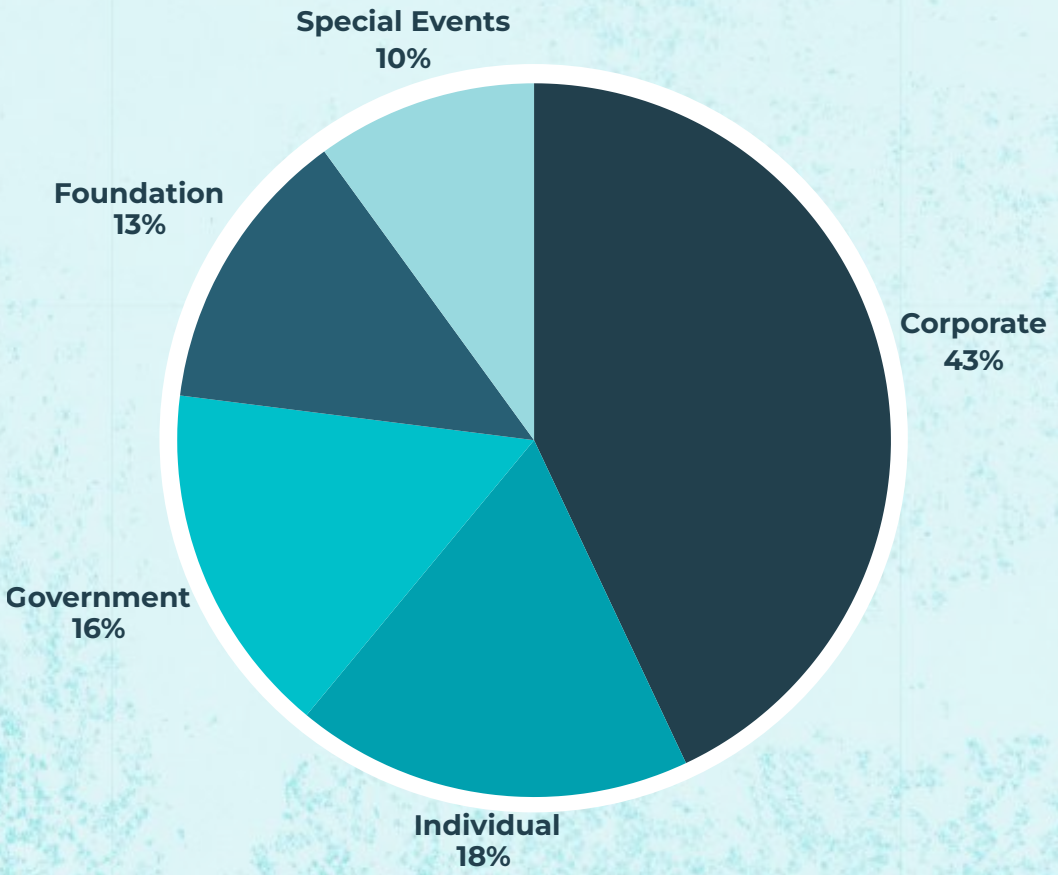
FINANCIALS

Total Revenue

$3,755,256

Expenses

Programs $2,884,862.00 (85%)
Fundraising $321,012.00 (9%)
Management $202,616.00 (6%)



Junior Achievement™ of Eastern Iowa

JAEI TEAM



Christine Landa
President



Erin Kurt
Senior Vice President of Operations



Whitney Schreder
Vice President of Finance



Dr. Nate Klein
Vice President of Education



Michelle Waldron
Vice President of Human Resources



Julie Parisi,
Vice President of Development

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Kristi Brown

HUMAN RESOURCES

Beth Horan

OPERATIONS

Emma Disterhoft
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Kira Canon
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3DE™ National Employee

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LEADERSHIP

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Junior Achievement™ of Eastern Iowa

LEADERSHIP

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Junior Achievement™ of Eastern Iowa

Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa

IMPACT CIRCLE

EMPOWERING

IOWA Iowa Workforce Development

TRANSAMERICA®

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PREPARING

WELLS FARGO

MIDAMERICAN ENERGY FOUNDATION

Robert & Elizabeth Allsop Charitable Fund

INSPIRING

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McElroy Trust

APPENDIX

1 Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa Student Longitudinal Study. (2021-2025). Internal Report: unpublished.

2 Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa JA Career Inspire® Event Summary. (JAEI Area: 2024-2025). Internal Report: unpublished.

3 Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa JA Finance Park® Mobile Summary. (Cedar Rapids Community School District: 2024-2025). Internal Report: unpublished.

4 Junior Achievement of Eastern All JA Programs. (JAEI:2024-2025). Internal Report: unpublished.

5 Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa JA Biz Town® Mobile Summary. (JAEI: 2024-2025). Internal Report: unpublished.

6 Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa JA More Than Money® Summary. (JAEI: 2024-2025). Internal Report: unpublished.

7 Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa JA Our City® Summary. (JAEI: 2024-2025). Internal Report: unpublished.



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