

A young Black man with short dark hair and a goatee is smiling broadly at the camera. He is wearing a grey and white plaid button-down shirt over a light-colored t-shirt. A black backpack strap is visible over his right shoulder. He is holding a red folder with several papers inside in his left hand and giving a thumbs-up with his right hand. The background is a solid green wall. The image has yellow and teal geometric overlays in the corners.

# 2024-2025 IMPACT REPORT



Junior  
Achievement<sup>™</sup>  
of Acadiana



# Greetings,

Each day at Junior Achievement of Acadiana, our team and Board of Directors work to help young people discover what's possible in their lives through programming focused on financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship.

We do this by helping them connect what they learn in school with life outside the classroom. We let them know it's possible to invest in their future, to gain a better understanding of how the world works, and to pursue their dreams. We show them that it's possible for tomorrow to be a better day.

This approach is more important than ever. Today's young people face challenges that didn't exist just a few years ago.

At JA, we don't just teach financial literacy, work and career readiness, and entrepreneurship. We promote hope. Our volunteers serve as positive role models and mentors for young people who might otherwise be disconnected. Our programs are shown to engage students on a social and emotional level with critical life skills that establish a firm foundation for them to achieve their potential as adults. We are proud to share that JA Acadiana has served **11,000** students this year, but we cannot do this work alone.

As you review this update, we hope you consider investing in our future consumers, employers, and employees. We need our future leaders to ensure a sustainable economy and community. It is more important now than ever to provide young people with the skillset and mindset to build thriving communities. Consider volunteering or making a gift to JA today to make a difference!

With gratitude,



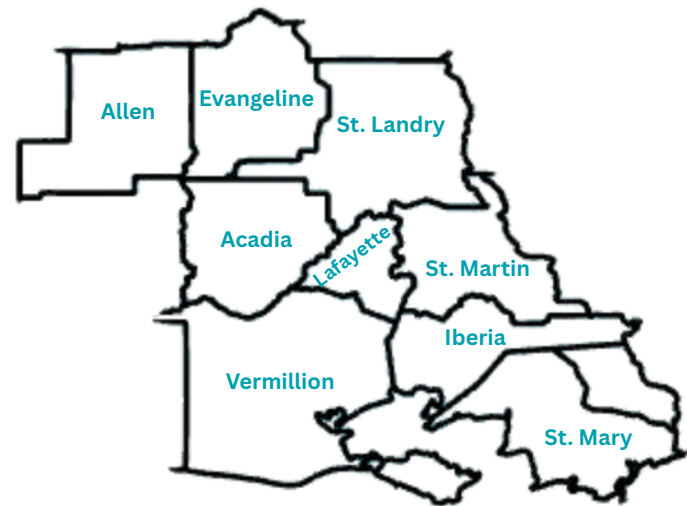
Paula Dawson  
President  
Junior Achievement Greater Baton Rouge & Acadiana



P O Box 52148  
Lafayette, LA 70505

[acadiana.ja.org](http://acadiana.ja.org)

Junior Achievement supports students in public, parochial, and private schools in the following parishes throughout Acadiana.



*To inspire and prepare  
young people to  
succeed in a global  
economy.*

# ABOUT JA

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We are the nation's largest organization dedicated to giving young people the knowledge and skills they need to own their economic success, plan for their futures, and make smart academic and economic choices.

Junior Achievement's programs-in the core content areas of work readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy-ignite the spark in young people to experience and realize the opportunities and realities of work and life in the 21st century.



# A BRIEF HISTORY

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Junior Achievement was founded in 1919 by Theodore Vail, president of American Telephone & Telegraph; Horace Moses, president of Strathmore Paper Co.; and Senator Murray Crane of Massachusetts. Its first program, JA Company Program®, was offered to high school students on an after-school basis. In 1975, the organization entered the classroom with the introduction of Project Business for the middle grades. Since then, Junior Achievement has expanded its activities and broadened its scope to include in-school and after-school students.

# PURPOSE

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To inspire and prepare young people to succeed in a global economy.

# VALUES

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- Belief in the boundless potential of young people
- Approach our work with passion, honesty, integrity, and excellence
- Seek out diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and talents in our staff and volunteers, and boards to reflect the geographies and communities we serve
- Teach principled, market- based economics and entrepreneurship that build a more sustainable world
- Nurture the power of partnership and collaboration
- Advocate for hands-on learning



# JA PROGRAMS PROVEN SUCCESS

Karyme Garcia is a proud graduate of the Acadiana High School Business Academy and an alumna of the very first “Trust Your Crazy Ideas Challenge.” During the inaugural year of the competition, she stood out among her peers, earning second place locally and receiving a \$2,500 scholarship to support her academic and career pursuits.

Currently, Karyme works as a Marketing Assistant at Rudick Construction Group in Lafayette, where she brings her creativity and strategic thinking to a variety of projects. Her role allows her to explore her passion for marketing and communications in a fast-paced, ever-evolving industry.

In the spring of 2025, Karyme gave back to her alma mater by serving as a mentor in the Acadiana High School Leading Ladies program, where she inspired and guided current students with her experience and insight.

Passionate about her career, Karyme is motivated by the limitless potential for innovation and creativity in the marketing field. She continues to grow professionally while staying connected to the programs that helped shape her journey.



## WAYS TO GET INVOLVED



### Volunteer

Join us as we continue to grow and reach more students in our community. Your time is your most valuable gift. Click [HERE](#) to sign up today.

### Financial Support

No gift is too small! Please consider making a gift today to sponsor a student's experience with financial literacy, work readiness training, and entrepreneurship programming. Click [HERE](#) to donate.

### Join Us for a JA Event

We invite you or your company to participate in our Annual TopGolf Challenge or Business Hall of Fame. Click [HERE](#) to learn about all the different events we host to benefit JA.



# IMPACT

## Acadiana

2024-2025

32

Participating  
Schools



804

Volunteers



11,533

Students  
Served



36,374

Mentor/  
Curriculum Hours



# EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Junior Achievement's unique delivery system provides the training, materials, and support necessary to bolster the chances for student success. The impact is measurable, too. Students who participate in Junior Achievement programs demonstrate a significant understanding of economics and business concepts. We invite you to take a closer look at our programs!



**CLICK HERE**



**LEARN  
MORE**

*About Our  
Programs*

## JA Junior Achievement<sup>™</sup> of Acadiana In-a-Day

JA in a Day is a Junior Achievement (JA) program that delivers lessons to an entire grade level in a single day. The program aims to inspire and educate students about the connection between education and workplace success, and to help them understand how to make choices to meet their needs and wants. JA-in-a-Day programs include practical information about earning, saving, and sharing money.

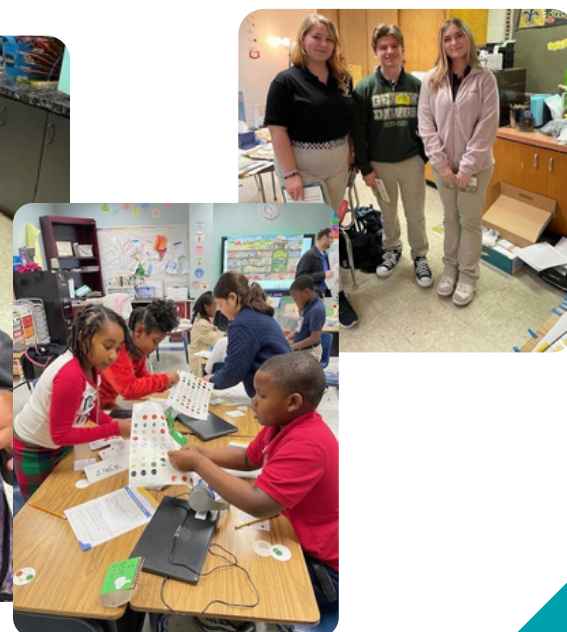


featuring

**JA** Junior Achievement<sup>™</sup>  
**BizTown**

**discovery  
center**  
*Mobile*  
**COMING  
SOON**

**COMING TO ACADIANA MAY 2026:** JA BizTown combines in-class learning with a day-long visit to a Discovery Center Mobile site. While visiting JA BizTown, students can connect the dots between what they learn in school and the real world. At JA BizTown, students visit a simulated town where they learn to operate businesses and municipalities, vote for a mayor, create the news, have their first day on the job and work as a team to create a successful business.





# LEARNING THROUGH MENTORING

Junior Achievement's Leading Ladies and Mentoring Men programs connect students with dedicated mentors from our local community who inspire and guide them through lessons in career readiness, confidence, and life skills. With support from volunteers and partners, these programs continue to grow, providing impactful mentorship experiences that help students envision and prepare for bright futures.



## MENTORING MEN





# ALL ABOUT CARS: GILES CAR CLINIC

Junior Achievement's All About Cars: Giles Car Clinic program gives high school students hands-on experience with basic car maintenance and ownership essentials. Through interactive sessions led by **Giles Automotive** professionals, students learn practical skills like checking oil, changing a tire, and understanding car insurance,—empowering them to be more confident and prepared vehicle owners. Sincere thanks to Bob Giles and his team for their mentorship.





# EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

This year, Junior Achievement celebrated a series of impactful and inspiring events that brought our mission to life in powerful ways. From the excitement of the Kings of Swing Topgolf Challenge to the elegance of the Business Hall of Fame and the energy of the new Pioneering Possibilities Luncheon, each gathering united our community around the shared goal of preparing young people for success. These events not only raised critical funds but also deepened connections with volunteers, donors, and partners who make our work possible.



## KINGS OF SWING

The Kings of Swing Topgolf Challenge presented by **First National Bank of Jeanerette** brought together local leaders for a fun-filled evening of friendly competition and networking—all in support of Junior Achievement's in-school initiatives. With strong community turnout and generous sponsorships, the event raised \$34,166 to bring JA programs to more students across the region. [CLICK HERE](#) to relive the entire event.



## BUSINESS HALL OF FAME

The Acadiana Business Hall of Fame celebrated outstanding business leaders who have made a lasting impact on the region. This elegant evening, presented by **First Horizon Bank**, honored their achievements while raising a remarkable \$60,700 to support Junior Achievement's mission. The event drew strong community support and highlighted the power of mentorship, leadership, and investing in the next generation.

For a closer look at the event, including photos and videos, visit Junior Achievement of Acadiana's facebook [HERE](#). Be sure to follow us for all of the good news from JA.



Check out videos from current and past honorees

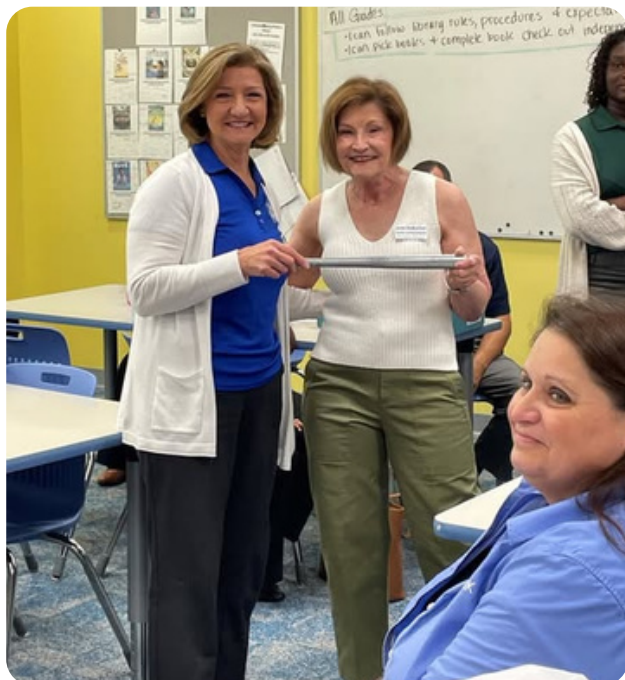
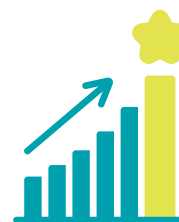


## **PIONEERING POSSIBILITIES** *An Executive Luncheon*

## **PIONEERING POSSIBILITIES: EXECUTIVE LUNCHEON**

Since 2019, this luncheon has been a powerful tradition—thanks to Bob Giles and his incredible co-hosts, Joe Spell and Kyle Kellner—helping grow Junior Achievement's reach from 5,000 to 12,000 students, and raising incredible dollars each year to pioneer new possibilities for our future leaders. This year's event continued the momentum, raising an impressive \$26,590 to support JA's mission. Special thanks to City Club for generously donating the event venue and food, making this impactful day possible.

## **OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER and MENTOR: Vickie Butte**



Junior Achievement of Acadiana is proud to recognize Vickie Butte as this year's Outstanding Volunteer! A Financial Center Leader at Hancock Whitney, Vickie has been a dedicated JA volunteer for over 14 years, mentoring students through the Leading Ladies program and teaching countless financial literacy classes across Iberia and Lafayette Parish schools.

Vickie was also one of the very first volunteers from the banking community to participate in the launch of the JA in a Day program at Prairie Elementary School—a program that continues to grow and impact young learners.

In honor of her years of commitment, Vickie was presented with a special "limited edition" Junior Achievement bat. A small token of our immense gratitude, it proudly states: "Thanks Vickie, for going to bat for JA Acadiana for 14 Years."

Thank you, Vickie, for your passion, dedication, and the difference you continue to make!

*Thank you* 



# SNAPSHOTS OF IMPACT

From memorable student events to standout community moments, these highlights showcase the energy, impact, and connections built throughout the year. Whether through conferences, programs, or unforgettable snapshots, each moment reflects the heart of our mission in action.



# BOARD MEMBERS

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**Eddie Buttross, Board Chair**

Vice President, Commercial  
Banking  
First Horizon Bank

**Chris McFarlain, Treasurer**

Associate Director  
Eisner Amper

**Lauren Bercier, Member**

Co-Founder & CEO  
Something Borrowed Blooms

**Allison Billeaud, Member**

Marketing Manager  
Tides Medical

**Ken Blanc, Member**

Materials Manager  
Acadian Companies

**Tracy Broussard, Member**

Consumer Banking Manager  
Regions Bank

**Lauren Davis Callihan, Member**

Director of Marketing and  
Community Impact  
Meritus Credit Union

**Heather DeValcourt, Member**

**Dawn Fuqua, Member**

Associate  
Gachassin Law Firm

**Shelly Judice, Member**

Vice President, Commercial  
Banking  
Catalyst Bank

**Dr. Vincent June, Member**

Chancellor  
SoLAcc

**Chris Kessel, Member**

Banking Center Manager  
Hancock Whitney

**Kaleb Legg, Member**

Financial Advisor  
The Pinnacle Group

**Eric Marter, Member**

SVP, Commercial Banker  
B1 Bank

**Destin Ortego, Member**

Executive Director  
Opportunity Machine

**Shade Ortego, Member**

Release Train Engineer  
CGI Federal

**Rhonda Seaux, Member**

Account Manager  
Louisiana Blue

**Nic Walts, Member**

Director of Policy  
The Picard Group

**Tori Williams, Member**

AVP BSA & Financial Crimes  
Home Bank

**Sam Ziadeh, Member**

Owner  
The UPS Store



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## COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS



START SMALL  
**GROW BIG**

BY  THE UPS STORE  Junior Achievement®

This spring, our partners at Jersey Mike's and The UPS Store stepped up in a big way to support Junior Achievement's mission. During Jersey Mike's Month of Giving, local stores raised an incredible \$18,730, helping us inspire and prepare even more students across Acadiana.

Not to be outdone, participating UPS Store locations brought in \$2,366 through their in-store campaign—*showing that every dollar truly adds up to make a difference.*

We're so grateful for the generosity and commitment of these community-minded businesses. Their efforts are more than just fundraising—they're investing in the future of our students.





**Junior  
Achievement™**  
of Acadiana