



JA Finance Park®

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## **Junior Achievement of New Jersey (JANJ) Stands Out as Leader in Financial Literacy Education**

*JANJ empowers New Jersey's students to own their economic success, while giving schools free resources to meet state financial literacy standards.*

**Princeton, NJ**—Four years after New Jersey adopted State Curriculum Standards in Financial Literacy (Standard 9.2), Junior Achievement of New Jersey (JANJ) is at the forefront of delivering standards-based financial education programs that are preparing students across the Garden State to make smarter decisions about how they save and spend their money.

This past school year (2012-2013), JANJ reports its biggest reach ever, with 44,569 New Jersey students getting an edge on their financial futures through JANJ's engaging financial education programs. Offered to schools at no cost, JANJ's nationally-recognized, turnkey curricula are taught by teachers and trained volunteers from the business community.

While New Jersey's financial literacy standards are relatively new, JA's involvement in the field dates back to 1919 when Junior Achievement was founded. Today, Junior Achievement is the world's largest provider of educational curriculum in financial literacy, work readiness and entrepreneurship. The non-profit organization is setting the bar in quality financial literacy programming, which is particularly evident here in New Jersey through the increasing demand for JANJ curriculum in schools across the state.

"JANJ is proud to report that the 2012-2013 school year was among our most successful to date, helping New Jersey's communities and filling the education gap by fostering business education partnerships and connecting positive role models with New Jersey's students," said JANJ President Catherine Milone. "More and more New Jersey schools are finding our innovative financial literacy programs the best solution to meet state requirements. Not only are our curriculums free, more importantly, they are data-driven and standards-based with a record of achievement in driving academic excellence and delivering results," she continued.

One particular JANJ program that is yielding exceptional student outcomes is JA Finance Park®, which begins with 13 classroom lessons on saving and investing, salary and taxes, personal budgeting, and setting career goals. Students are then challenged to put their newly-acquired life skills to the test in a day-long visit to the Capital One/Junior Achievement Finance Park simulated city—a high-tech learning

lab where they are assigned fictional jobs, incomes, families and expenses, and are tasked with developing and managing their household budgets. This unique partnership between Junior Achievement and Capital One Bank gives middle and high school students experience in making real-life budgetary decisions. Volunteers from local New Jersey businesses mentor the students during their journey through the simulated city, helping them make the financial decisions and trade-offs their families face daily in the real world.

This past school year, 3,943 students in grades 7-12 from 15 NJ counties, including Essex, Camden, Bergen, Hudson, Morris, Somerset, and Union had the opportunity to apply their financial knowledge at Capital One/Junior Achievement Finance Park. The simulated city unit was previously based in Newark, but plans are underway for the mobile learning center to be located in Central and Northern New Jersey in the coming school year to expand the program's impact and reach. Junior Achievement also created an online version of the simulated city called JA Finance Park® Virtual to give schools located in remote areas of the state the flexibility and opportunity to participate in the JA Finance Park® program.

JANJ conducts pre and post assessments of all New Jersey students who participate in JA Finance Park® to measure comprehension of the curriculum material, and it is clear the program is producing results. Across the board, students significantly improved their knowledge of key personal financial concepts, particularly in the areas of credit, budgeting and savings. On the pre-test, the average student score was 47 percent. This score rose to 68 percent on the post-test. In other words, students increased their post-test scores by 21 percentage points, realizing an average score increase of 46 percent.

“At Capital One, we believe that a quality education is the most important determinant of future success for children – and that financial literacy and money-management skills are crucial building blocks for economic success,” said Ed Waterfield, senior vice president, Commercial Banking and New Jersey market president at Capital One Bank. “Finance Park has a proven track record in engaging students in financial-education learning that is both substantive and fun. We are proud to partner with JANJ on this meaningful curriculum.”

JANJ is currently enrolling New Jersey schools in JA Finance Park® and other financial literacy programs for the coming school year. Schools interested in taking advantage of JANJ's free standards-based financial literacy curriculums should contact JANJ at 609-419-0404.

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#### ***About JA Finance Park®***

*JA Finance Park® provides schools the resources to meet New Jersey's core curriculum content standards and graduation requirement in financial literacy (Standard 9.2) by giving middle and high school students invaluable experience in money management and career exploration.*

*The program begins with 13 teacher-led classroom lessons on personal finances and culminates in either a visit to a simulated city called Capital One/JA Finance Park, or in-class participation in the online virtual simulation called JA Finance Park® Virtual. Both experiences challenge students to apply the financial knowledge they acquire in class to real-life financial scenarios about saving, spending, investing and philanthropic giving.*

*JA Finance Park® was developed by JA Worldwide®, Capital One Financial Corporation, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs and the U.S. Department of Justice. More than 13,000 New Jersey students have benefitted from the program since its inception in 2008. For more information about JA Finance Park®, visit [http://janj.org/programs/ja\\_finance\\_park](http://janj.org/programs/ja_finance_park).*

***About Junior Achievement of New Jersey***

*Junior Achievement of New Jersey (JANJ) is leading the charge in empowering young people in the Garden State to own their economic success through turnkey, standards-based curriculum programs in financial literacy, work readiness and entrepreneurship. Delivered by JANJ's extensive network of trained volunteers, JANJ's sequential K-12 programs are preparing New Jersey's youth to be leaders in their communities, while giving schools the resources they need to ensure students meet New Jersey's core curriculum content standards and graduation requirements in financial literacy (Standard 9.2). JANJ's free, data-driven programs are a win-win for all; driving excellence and delivering results in financial education that are moving students, parents and families, volunteers, schools and communities forward. In the 2012-2013 school year, 44,569 New Jersey students got an edge on their financial future through Junior Achievement. For more information, please visit <http://janj.org>.*

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***Driving Excellence, Delivering Results***