

Northvail Students Learn Economic Concepts in Annual Program

This is the fourth year the school has participated in the Junior Achievement program.

Posted by Kim Tran October 20, 2013 at 06:17 PM



Mimi Stepek, a JA volunteer in Mrs. Masucci's 4th grade class at Northvail

Today, schools are ramping up their efforts to make sure students are college and career ready.

Over at Northvail Elementary, all students participated in the Junior Achievement program for the fourth year in a row.

JA helps "students understand the importance of entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and work readiness," according to

its website.

At Northvail, "the program consists of two 'JA' volunteers from New Jersey Manufacturers Insurance Group per classroom who teach grade level themes that help students learn economic concepts. Such themes increase in scope as the students advance in grade level," said Lorraine Esposito, a reading teacher at Northvail.

Here's a quick glance at what each grade level focused on:

- Kindergarten "Ourselves"
- First "Our Families"
- Second "Our Community"
- Third "Our City"
- Fourth "Our Region"
- Fifth "Our Nation"

Pat Hartpence of NJM and JANJ Board Member and Mimi Stepek have volunteered all four years in this Northvail program.

"It is so rewarding when the information reaches the students and they have the enthusiasm to learn," said Hartpence. "It's been wonderful working with Principal Jeff

Martens and we enjoy working with (Maryann) Masucci (a Northvail fourth grade teacher) each year. We find Northvail students to be very engaged during our lessons."

The volunteers contribute to this program's overall success. Jamie Berkenstock and Cindy Berger were volunteers in (Laura) Centurrino's second grade class.

"I wanted to be a teacher because kids are fun, they teach me as much as I can teach them," said Berkenstock, who has volunteered for the past three years. "Teachers make teaching look easy, but it's not."

The students equally enjoy the fresh ideas and fun lessons provided by the volunteers, said Esposito.

"JA's unique approach allows volunteering corporations in the community such as New Jersey Manufacturers Insurance Group, to deliver lessons while sharing their work experiences with students. These classroom volunteers transform the key concepts of the lessons into a message that not only inspires, but also empowers students to believe in themselves. This valuable insight is essential to showing them they can make a difference in the world. The Junior Achievement Program is among the many exciting opportunities at Northvail for students to learn about their world and their own inner capabilities."