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Women's Forum Inspires Promising High School Girls

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On May 29 at Lockheed Martin, Moorestown, more than 60 of New Jersey's top female executives and business leaders from various industries came together to support some of New Jersey's most promising high school-age girls from Pleasantville High School, Cherry Hill High School West, LEAP Academy University Charter School, Washington Township High School, and Manchester Township. High School at JA's Annual South Jersey Women's Future Leadership Forum, the last of their three regional Forum events being held this school-year. The May 29 event was sponsored by Lockheed Martin and Chamber of Commerce South New Jersey and was also supported by Virtua serving as a breakout session lead and ARI, Archer & Greiner, AmeriHealth, & American Water serving as transportation sponsors.

The Forum kicked off with welcome remarks by Catherine Milone, president, Junior Achievement of New Jersey, who encouraged everyone in the room to take full advantage of this networking opportunity. Then, panel discussions were led by moderator Kimberly Ramalho, vice president of Communications & Public Affairs for Lockheed Martin's Mission Systems and Training business.

"This is truly a great event that brings together a few of New Jersey's top female executives and promising young women from local schools to share personal stories of the importance of education and making smart economic decisions," said Ramalho. "Today there are more opportunities for young woman to learn about science, technology, engineering and math, and we look to inspire each to pick a field that they can reach their full potential."

The panel of executives included Councilwoman Susan Shin-Angulo, Cherry Hill Township; Tiffany Harmon Banks, vice president, Human Resources, Hill International, Inc.; Suzanne Chiavari, PE, AW National Engineering Practice Leader, American Water; Susan K. Choi, Ph.D., Dean of Math & Science, Camden County College; Rhonda Jordan, senior vice president & chief human resources officer, Virtua. The esteemed panel shared their personal stories through an exciting and informative question and answer session that included sharing their top teachable and most courageous professional moments in their lives. The discussions were also included a variety of topics relevant to the girls around the importance of an education, building their network and the value of owning their personal economic success as it relates to their future.

The panel discussions were followed by one-on-one mentoring sessions that helped the young ladies build self-confidence by crafting their first-ever personal bios and practicing their elevator pitches. Also, when in pairs, the students received further guidance on the relevance of receiving a secondary education.

The day also featured a hands-on, team building lesson from the JA Career Success® program which included the program's four main skill building concepts, the 4 C's: critical thinking, collaboration, creativity and communication in small group breakout sessions. The day concluded with a large group discussion in the auditorium, where the students shared their takeaways and expressed their gratitude for the day's experience.

Catherine Milone, JANJ's president shared, "JA's Women's Future Leadership Forums are truly an inspirational and motivational experience for both the young woman participants and the adults alike, who served as the mentors. Their day was filled with such positive encouragement that by day's end the students were vying for the microphone to share their key takeaways and first-ever elevator pitches."

About Junior Achievement of New Jersey

Junior Achievement of New Jersey (JANJ) is dedicated to giving young people the knowledge and skills they need to own their economic success, plan for their future, and make smart academic and economic choices. JA programs are delivered by corporate and community volunteers. They provide relevant, hands-on experiences that give students from kindergarten through high school knowledge and skills in financial literacy, work readiness and entrepreneurship. During the 2013-14 school year, JANJ will reach nearly 48,000 students in more than 71 school districts across the New Jersey. For more information visit us at www.janj.org. Follow us on Twitter and like us on Facebook.