JA Banks in Action North American Champions Crowned

Christopher Borders, Edward Balaguer and Burns Healy, students from Anderson High School in Austin, Texas, were crowned the champions of the second annual JA Banks in Action™ North American Competition. The event was held in New York from June 30-July 1 by the Citi Foundation and JA Worldwide®. Team Anderson Bank® bested sixteen other regional semi-finalists from Delaware, Arizona, Nevada, Kentucky, Texas and Canada for the North American title.

The second-place team also hailed from Anderson High School in Austin and was comprised of Jae Lee, Daniel Hay and Ne’Frisco Nash.

JA Banks in Action demystifies finance by explaining how a bank works. Geared to high school students, JA Banks in Action is an innovative online high school-level program that helps students act as virtual CEOs, exercising critical economic and management decisions using an interactive web-based simulation of companies competing in an imaginary global marketplace. JA Titan gives participants firsthand experience managing the challenges that come with operating a successful global enterprise.

Junior Achievement Names 2008 Teacher of the Year

Trudy D. Hines of Lincoln Public Schools’ Entrepreneurship Focus Program in Lincoln, Nebraska, has been named the 2008 Junior Achievement Teacher of the Year. The award recognizes teachers who have demonstrated excellence, effectiveness and innovation in their support of Junior Achievement programs which teach work readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy skills to 8.3 million youth around the world annually.

The award is made possible through a grant from The Little Family Foundation, and is open to teachers worldwide. Nominations were received from Junior Achievement operations in 19 countries. Selection of the award winner is made by an external panel comprised of stakeholders from each of Junior Achievement’s six global regions. Hines has used Junior Achievement programs in her classroom for 22 years and was nominated by Junior Achievement of Lincoln.

Oracle Invests $1 Million in JA Titan

JA Worldwide has received a $1 million Oracle Commitment Grant in support of JA Titan™, a web-based business competition for teens. The gift will support expansion of JA Titan® beyond the United States and Canada to 10 additional countries around the world. JA operations in Israel, Poland, Romania, Spain, and South Africa will be the first to translate JA Titan.

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JA Members Recognized for Innovation, Win MetLife Foundation Entrepreneurial Awards

JA Worldwide (Junior Achievement) announced that eight JA operations, six in the United States and two international, have won the 2008 MetLife Foundation Entrepreneurial Award. The awards were announced July 16 at the JA Worldwide Leadership Conference.

Presented annually since 2001, the award recognizes Junior Achievement operations that demonstrate entrepreneurial spirit and innovation in achieving sustainable results for their primary stakeholders—students, schools, volunteers, and donors. Each winner receives a cash award of $25,000 to continue and expand their work, and JA Worldwide shares best practices throughout the organization. The eight award-winning offices and their winning initiatives are listed below.

2008 MetLife Foundation Entrepreneurial Award winners:
- Junior Achievement of Central Florida, Civic Engagement Partnership
- Junior Achievement of Eastern Massachusetts, JA Connect
- Junior Achievement of Eastern Oklahoma, SOS—Skills of Success
- Junior Achievement of North Florida, JA Girl$: SOS—Skills of Success
- Junior Achievement of Romania, Be a Leader Program
- Junior Achievement of South Dakota, Distance Learning and Participation Initiative
- Junior Achievement of West Central Florida, JA Diploma-see
- Pretas Junior Indonesia, Economics for Life

JA Worldwide unveiled two new programs at its recent Worldwide Leadership Conference. One was a re-imagining of a perennial favorite, the other a brand-new addition to JA’s program mix.

Our Nation® was initially unveiled in 1993 and is used each year by 561,000 elementary grades students globally. The newly revised Our Nation, sponsored by United Technologies Corporation (UTC), teaches workforce readiness skills, introduces the concept of globalization, and provides students with a focus on careers in STEM industries: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. Our Nation activities use hands-on learning to illustrate the interdependence fostered by globalization, UTC’s Andrea Duane, Director, Corporate Citizenship and Community Investment, says, “STEM is particularly important because the quality of life that we enjoy today is dependent on it—for economies to continue to grow, these are the skills that will be needed.” According to the U.S. Department of Labor’s 2008-09 Occupational Outlook Handbook, 15 of the 20 fastest-growing jobs, projected by percentage of growth, are STEM-related.

The other new program is JA Exploring Economics, sponsored by MetLife Foundation, was created to be used as a stand-alone, seven-session program for high school students, or to be used as companion material for the existing JA Economics textbook. JA Exploring Economics makes complex economic concepts accessible and relevant by using engaging, experiential activities. Students learn about supply and demand, risk and reward, and the effect of government actions on the economy. The lessons let students actively participate in the program, which they find more compelling than passively listening to a lecture.

April Hawkins, Director of the Civic Affairs Programs for MetLife Foundation, notes, “One of the things that JA is expert in doing is helping young people make the link between what they learn from JA’s financial literacy curricula, and what’s to come in higher education and the world of work.”

Both programs demonstrate JA’s commitment to providing students with engaging and relevant content around its “three pillars”: workforce readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy.