

**For Immediate Release**

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**JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT RECEIVES \$100,000 GRANT FROM  
AMERICAN STUDENT ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT JA INSPIRE**  
*Career Pathways Program to Reach 9,000 Eighth-Grade Students in Rhode Island*

*Warwick, Rhode Island* – Junior Achievement of Rhode Island announced today that they have received a \$100,000 grant from American Student Assistance® ([ASA](#)) to support their JA Inspire career pathways program. JA Inspire, which is planned to reach 9,000 Rhode Island eighth-graders next month, was developed to help support the Governor’s Workforce Board’s – PrepareRI action plan, which is “a commitment by the State of Rhode Island to improve the career readiness and postsecondary attainment of all Rhode Island youth to prepare them with the skills they need for jobs that pay.”

The JA Inspire program includes four in-class sessions where students will take a personality assessment to see what jobs align with their interests, research those jobs, and see what skills and educational requirements are needed to obtain and be successful in those jobs. Students will then go to the Rhode Island Convention Center for the JA Inspire Career Exploration Fair, where they will get to explore various high-wage/high-demand careers. Exhibits will include over 150 interactive career stations with over 500 mentors from local companies working with students who will participate in hands-on activities, often using equipment or tools used on a job. After the career fair, students participate in a final in-class session to reflect on what they have learned and identify next steps to further define their academic choices and career paths.

“JA Inspire is designed to impact students at a time when they are making important decisions regarding high school choice and starting on a career pathway that aligns with their skills and interests.” said Lee Lewis, president of Junior Achievement of Rhode Island. “We are grateful for this partnership with ASA, which will ensure that we can bring JA Inspire to over 80% of Rhode Island’s 8<sup>th</sup> graders.”

“JA Inspire is a groundbreaking program that eighth-graders in Rhode Island are fortunate to experience, and ASA is proud to be a part of it,” said Jean Eddy, President and CEO of American Student Assistance. “Career and interest exploration at an early age is critical to helping students find their path and plan for their future.”

To measure the impact of the program, Junior Achievement conducts pre- and post-test of students, as well as teacher and exhibitor surveys. Results from the December 2018 JA Inspire event showed:

- 94% of teachers would recommend the JA Inspire program to other teachers.
- 94% of teachers felt that JA Inspire improved their students' knowledge of industries in Rhode Island.
- 90% of students would recommend JA Inspire to a friend.
- 76% of students said that JA Inspire introduced them to businesses that they didn't know before.
- 68% of students mentioned that JA Inspire made them aware of high-paying careers in Rhode Island.

The complete summary of student results and teacher/exhibitor feedback is available at [www.jainspireri.org](http://www.jainspireri.org).

Past exhibitors at the JA Inspire Career Exploration Fair have included Amgen, Bank of America, Citizens Bank, Cox Communications, CVS Health, Electric Boat, EpiVax, National Grid, New England Laborers, and the RI Builders Association. In addition, several of the state's career and technical high schools and career pathways programs participate to show students their secondary school options. These include the Cranston Area Career & Technical Center, Regional Career & Technical Center at Coventry High School, William Davies Career & Technical High School, and the Woonsocket Area Career & Technical Center.

A complete list of past exhibitors is available at <https://www.jainspireri.org/ip/december18-exhibitors>.

#### **About Junior Achievement of Rhode Island**

Junior Achievement is the state's largest organization 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 and provide relevant, hands-on experiences that give students from kindergarten through high school knowledge and skills in financial literacy, workforce readiness and entrepreneurship. Today, JA reaches more than 13,500 students per year in more than 20 communities across Rhode Island. For more information, visit our website at <http://jarhodeisland.org>, connect with us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/juniorachievementri](http://www.facebook.com/juniorachievementri), or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/JARhodeIsland](http://www.twitter.com/JARhodeIsland).

#### **About American Student Assistance® (ASA)**

American Student Assistance® (ASA) is a national nonprofit committed to helping kids know themselves, know their options, and make informed choices to achieve their education and career goals. ASA® has a 60-year legacy of working directly with students to increase their access to higher education through loans and financial education. ASA has turned its experience into impactful solutions for students in grades 6-12 to help them pursue their dreams. To learn more about ASA, visit [www.asa.org/about-us](http://www.asa.org/about-us).

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