



**Junior
Achievement™**
of Memphis and the Mid-South



**IMPACT
REPORT**
—
SPRING 2023

DEAR FRIEND,

It's the statistic that keeps me up at night: When we asked thousands of 8th graders at last year's **JA Inspire** career simulation day if they could see themselves building careers in Memphis, **only four in 10 said yes.**

Friends, that is a neon-flashing red flag.

Then I think of Thaddeus Morgan, and I feel a lot better.

You may have seen Thaddeus on the day of the grand opening of the Wang Experiential Learning Center. He was wearing a bright blue jacket and standing near Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris at the ribbon-cutting (photo, p. 3). He took time off work to be there.

You see, Thaddeus was a JA intern when we were still downtown, before I arrived. He helped Alison Welch Elder restock **JA BizTown**, he helped at Bowl-a-thon, he reorganized supplies "to make it easier for us to take care of people," he said.

He began to see his future.

After graduating from Bolton High School, he tried college, but it wasn't for him. Instead, he got certified in project management and IT at [Tech901](#) and applied to work in Shelby County government. He started as an intern, but soon began working full-time at the front desk at the Office of Equal Opportunity Compliance, where he still works, **though with many more responsibilities.**

"I manage vendor applications, charges and other projects – things that confuse even people with doctoral degrees," Thaddeus said. He's working on more certifications so he can continue to move up.

"I told Alison at the opening: **'I wouldn't be where I am without y'all,'**" he said. "I still use the core values I learned from JA – how to talk to people, how to lead them, how to have extra patience and understanding."

We have a long way to go to make sure every child in our community sees a bright future. But Thaddeus's story reminds me that **it's possible, one child at a time.**

Leigh Mansberg

LEIGH MANSBERG

President & CEO





INNOVATION: OUR NEW HOME

A Grand Day!

The big moment when Robert Wang (center, with scissors) declared the Wang Experiential Learning Center open for the children of Memphis and the Mid-South. Also pictured, from left, JA COO Steve French, Memphis Chamber CEO and JA Board Member Ted Townsend, JA CEO Leigh Mansberg, Susan Wang, Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris, JA Board Chair and Simmons Bank Memphis President Brandon Cooper, former JA intern Thaddeus Morgan.



Mike Bruns, friend of JA, is with Ruby Bright, retired CEO of the Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis and former JA exec. In the background is Bright Futures City Hall, given by her friends to honor Ruby.



School leaders from public, private and charter schools get their first look at the brand-new JA BizTown/ JA Finance Park simulation space.



Jessica Taveau (left), President and CEO of Epicenter, is with Erica Plybeah, Founder and CEO of MedHaul.



Marlon Stansbury, STEM educator at Airways Middle, with Darius (left) and Lesly. Read their **JA BizTown** story on p. 6.

INNOVATION: OUR NEW HOME

Centering the Children

The next school day after our Grand Opening, we welcomed our first middle schoolers to the Wang Experiential Learning Center. Our calendar has been packed ever since.

Here's a look at our first month (Jan. 23 – Feb. 23):

770

Students participating in **JA BizTown**

163

Volunteers supporting **JA BizTown**

260

Students participating in **JA Finance Park**

54

Volunteers supporting **JA Finance Park**

17

Volunteers supporting **JA in a Day**
(our in-school K-5 program)

14

Community organizations, nonprofit boards and education partners have used the **JA What's Next** community room

(through 3/29)

7

Storefront investors' ribbon-cuttings since our Grand Opening, including **Cumulus, FedEx, Fogelman, Regions, Baptist, TVA** and **Orgill**

Thank you for believing in our children!

Want to book our community room for your organization? Contact Megan Ryan, call (901) 366-7800 or email mryan@jamemphis.org.

INNOVATION: OUR PROGRAMS

Fall 2022 Program Highlights

7,372

Total K-12 students served across all JA programs

137,042

Total hours of programming delivered

3,821

Total elementary students served with **JA in a Day**

3,672

Total high school students served

HS numbers include community partner programs, semester courses and **JA Launch Lessons**.

Prepare For The Future, Internship Edition

835

Total students served with **JA Soft Skills** and **JA It's My Job** training

212

Total Memphis Shelby County Schools students who participated in the **Jay Uiberall JA It's My Job** training day at the University of Memphis

40

Volunteers from JA's Young Professional Board and Board of Directors who participated in the **Jay Uiberall JA It's My Job** day



Mike Uiberall, center left, helps MSCS students prepare for paying internships at the **Jay Uiberall JA It's My Job** training day, sponsored by the Jay Uiberall Foundation.

INNOVATION: OUR PROGRAMS

Finding Their Voices: Inside a Day at JA BizTown

It's easy to fall in love with our beautiful new simulation space, but look closer: The real transformation happens when children spend the day there, as two 6th graders from Airways Middle School found out.



Ms. Jackson-Green

The children learn the BizTown curriculum in the month before they go, so when they see it all come to life, it's mind-blowing.

Lesly's job was to sell safety kits for Smith & Nephew. I went with her as she approached other students. Success! She sold her kits.

By the end Lesly was selling to everyone ... it was explosive. From shy, timid girl to Citizen of the Day!

The curriculum exposes them to things they have no knowledge about. They learn life skills that can affect the choices they make for the rest of their lives. It's incredible to watch them.

Our kids really need this.

Darius

Mr. Stansbury helped us prepare for BizTown. He told us how tough it's going to be out there.



Lesly At first, I thought this was going to be easy, but it wasn't.

Lesly

I was nervous and shy at first but then I just went for it. Eventually I got the confidence I needed.

Darius

I was the Terminix store manager – I would sell products to exterminate bugs. So I stood in front of my store yelling. But it was not easy. By the first break, no one had come.



Darius I decided my team would go to other businesses and ask them to come by our store. We worked hard but it was fun.

Thanks to our longtime College, Career and Technical Education (CCTE) partners Lakata Jackson-Green (pictured, above), Middle/Elementary Advisor, and Marlon Stansbury, STEM educator at Airways Middle, for sharing these amazing stories.



Traci Strickland of Paragon Bank with Binghampton Christian Academy fifth graders.



OUR VOLUNTEERS

“We loved seeing that spark”

When the need is greatest, you always remember the people who show up first. That’s how Paragon Bank showed up for JA: **Paragon brought the first volunteers to JA BizTown on the first week the Wang Center for Experiential Learning was open.**

In many ways, it was a no-brainer: “The bank is a class sponsor for the fifth grade at Binghampton Christian Academy; we’ve known these children since pre-K,” said Traci Strickland, SVP, Marketing and Consumer Experience at Paragon.

“Our team loved their experience,” Traci said. “We loved seeing that spark in the students, watching them gain real-world perspectives.”

She also said the **training the Paragon volunteers received before their simulation day was “so well done.”** Volunteering for JA is flexible: “You can work with younger children, older

16,936

Total volunteer hours over all JA programs, Fall 2022

children or not around children at all.” Orientation can be in person or on Zoom. The Paragon team is already looking forward to seeing their favorite students in future JA programs: “It’s great that students who go through these programs will be much more financially successful.”

WE NEED YOU!

To set up your own volunteer experience with JA, email volunteer@jamemphis.org or call (901) 366-7800, or [CLICK HERE](#) to see the opportunities available.



FORD | FUND

Thanks, Ford Fund!

Junior Achievement of Memphis and the Mid-South is proud to be one of only four organizations in Shelby County to receive a grant from the Ford Fund, the philanthropic arm of the Ford Motor Company. Ford is building Blue Oval City in Stanton, Tennessee, to manufacture electric Ford F-150 pickup trucks by 2025. This grant is a signature achievement, because it recognizes that **JA is a key workforce development pillar in West Tennessee, because of our comprehensive K-12 programs and our best-in-class middle school Capstone simulations, especially JA Inspire**, happening this year May 16-18 at the Agricenter.

JA In the Community

Media all over the region, including podcasts and social, took note of our opening of the Wang Experiential Learning Center. That included coverage from [WMC-TV Channel 5](#), [ABC-TV Channel 24](#), [Bluff City Life](#) and the [Daily Memphian](#).

The energy around Bowl-a-thon also generated some great coverage, including from [ABC-TV Channel 24](#) and [WMC-TV Channel 5](#).

We won!

The Wang Center for Experiential Learning was honored as the Best Renovation, Medium category in the Memphis Business Journal's Building Memphis Award. **Special shout-outs go to JA COO Steve French (center, right with the JA staff; Steve is holding the award), Fleming Architects and Linkous Construction – our very own Dream Team.**

