

# ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



JA  
South Western  
Ontario

Member of JA Canada

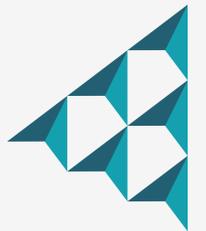
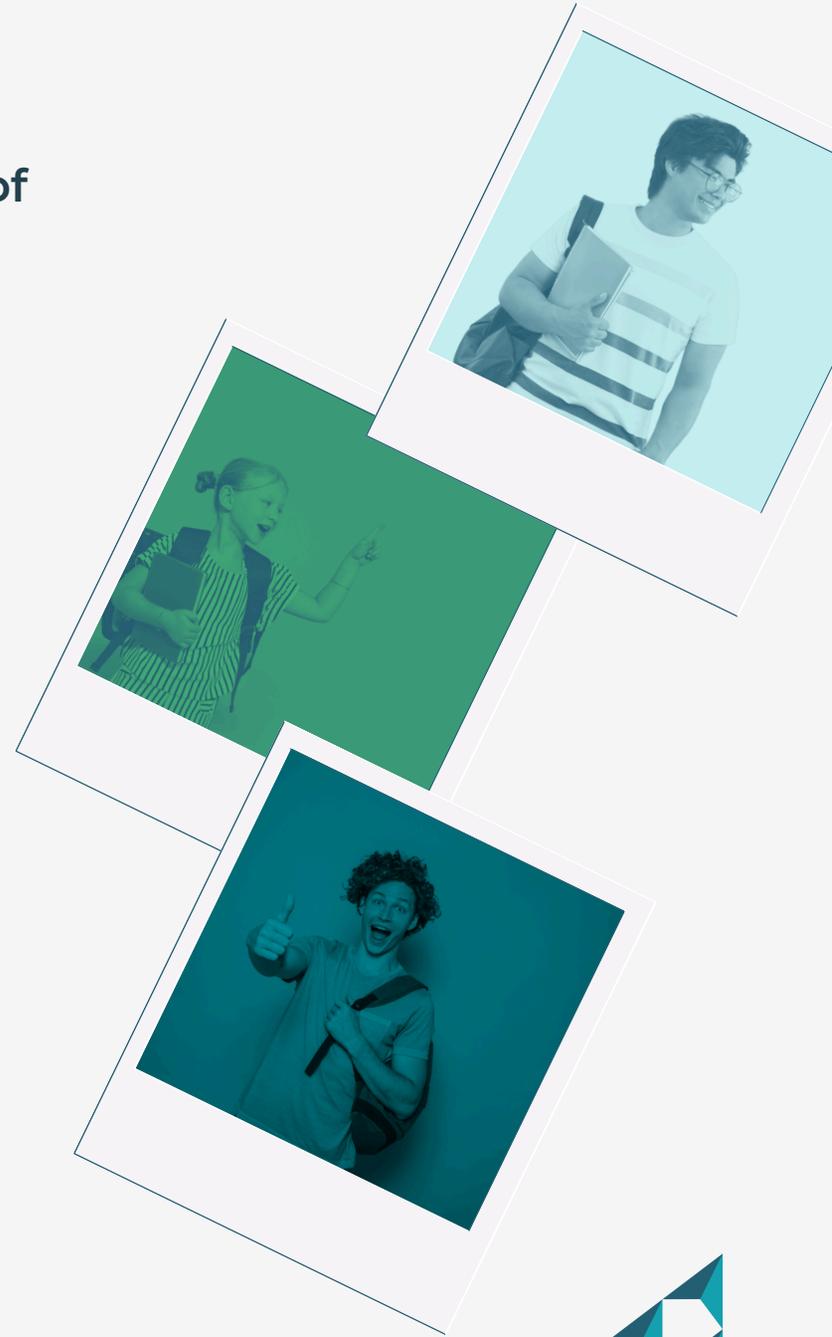


Years of  
Empowering  
Lives

*The next 60 starts here.*

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# A message from the Chair of the Board of Directors and the President & CEO

2023-2024 marked the 60th anniversary of JA in South Western Ontario. It was truly a year for celebration – a return to more “normal” school operations and an increase in volunteer engagement were highlights. We celebrated our 60th anniversary with a new fundraising strategy to support our growth and sustainability as well as an initiative to find our alumni. We were delighted to reconnect with so many individuals across Southwestern Ontario and enjoyed collecting their stories. Please visit <https://jaswo.org/ja-alumni-yearbook/> to read about what some of our alumni have done since their JA days and to hear their words of advice to young people.

In addition to our anniversary, it was the second year of our strategic plan and we made significant inroads. We delivered almost 50% more learning experiences from the previous year, benefitted from greater efficiencies thanks to technology and established the foundation for growth in some new regions while maintaining our reach in existing regions. We built upon research conducted by JA Canada to identify schools with the highest population of vulnerable youth, which will inform additional marketing and outreach in the coming years so we can have an even greater impact. Twenty-three of twenty-four school boards across our Region engaged with us over the year; our goal is to be in all school boards by the end of June 2025, so we’re well on our way!

We couldn’t have done this without the partnership of many, including educators, donors, businesses, local community members and staff. Thank you all for helping us achieve such a successful year. We have more to do, but know that together, we can ensure that every young person in South Western Ontario benefits from a JA learning experience during their school career!

With gratitude,

5  



**Derek Askew**  
Chair, Board of Directors



**Karen Gallant**  
President and CEO



“I have never stopped being an entrepreneur since my days at Junior Achievement.

JA taught me that you can get started with just a piece of paper and an idea. You don't need an elaborate business plan. You don't need a team. You just need to **believe in a vision and take that first action** towards making it real.”



**JENNA GOODHAND**



**JA ALUMNI: 2000 - 2002**

Jenna is the owner and CEO of Cafézia Coffee, a company that manufactures wellness coffee that reduces the negative effects of caffeine, while enhancing the positive ones. She is also the founder and owner of Speaker Comfort and Confidence, a public training and certification for enhancing public speaking skills.

Read more JA Alumni stories: [jaswo.org/ja-alumni-yearbook/](https://jaswo.org/ja-alumni-yearbook/)

# TOGETHER, We are JA

Together, we're building a stronger community by equipping young people with the real-world skills they need to succeed. Year after year, we see how the work we do together leads to success stories across our region, creating lasting positive change – one student at a time.



*The next 60 starts here.*

## RELEVANT HANDS-ON LEARNING WITH JA

- Financial Health
- Work Readiness
- Entrepreneurship



## Our Mission

JA inspires youth and prepares them to succeed in a global economy.

## Our Vision

A world in which...young people have the skillset and mindset to build thriving communities.



## Our Region

Since 1963, students in Southwestern Ontario have relied on JA to prepare them for success in an ever-changing global economy.

### JA SOUTH WESTERN ONTARIO IMPACT 2023-2024



**30,782**  
student  
engagements



**284**  
schools



**1056**  
classes



**601**  
volunteer  
engagements



# Highlights

## Quick Inspirations

The 2023-24 school year brought the official launch of our [Quick Inspirations](#) learning experiences! These **fun 30-minute online modules** can be added into class curriculum OR completed by students at home to ensure they're learning as much as possible about financial health, work readiness, and entrepreneurship. We're already seeing tremendous uptake from classes as well as independent learners!

Try our **Quick Inspirations**  
Online Learning Experiences that run 30 minutes or less

**Bizcraft**

How do I pay for things?

TEEN ROOM UPGRADE

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT POST-SECONDARY PATHWAYS?

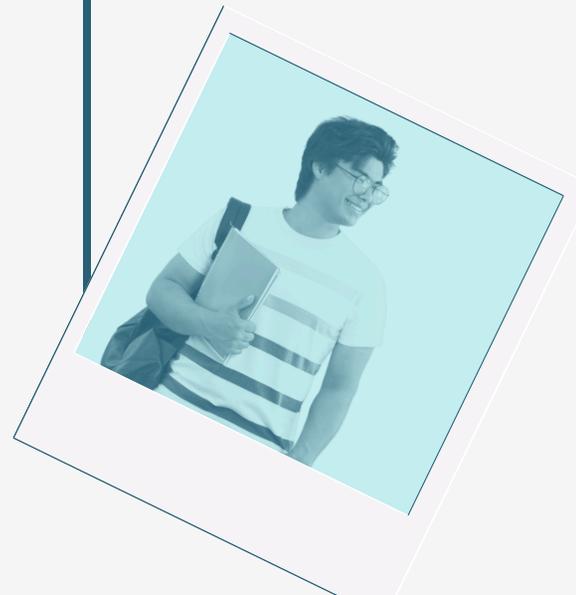
How can I have money for the things I need?

Success Skills Webinar Series: Resilience

## Success Skills

We piloted the *JA Success Skills* learning experience this year, which was very well received by teachers and students. It's a highly engaging program and we exceeded the targets we had set for deliveries!

During *JA Success Skills*, Grade 8 students identify and build a toolkit of transferable skills to increase resilience and improve outcomes through challenging situations.



# Highlights

## The Spark

This year, we launched *The Spark*, **our new online magazine** supporting our vision of a world in which young people have the skillset and mindset to build thriving communities. Here, you'll find stories and insights to help young people gain the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need for success.

We're excited to share ***The Spark*** with you all, and hope you find some great takeaways as you read!



## Future Focused in Hamilton

We dedicated important time this spring to connecting with community leaders in Hamilton to discuss ways to build a brighter future for students in the Hamilton community. We worked together to **lay the strategic groundwork to make a deep and lasting impact in Hamilton** - growing Junior Achievement's presence in the community to impact more youth.

Greening Media was kind enough to create a video from our initial event:



“Aspiring high school entrepreneurs should study finance and law as a foundational base for business success and to **develop a voracious reading habit**, which has proven to be invaluable for achieving success.”



**BRAD GEDDES**



**JA ALUMNI: 1972-1976**

Brad, the President & CEO of ZucoraHome, has a long-standing involvement with JA South Western Ontario, spanning more than a decade. He served in various roles on the Board of Directors, including Chair and Past Chair and is now honoured as a Director Emeritus, recognizing his significant contributions to the organization.

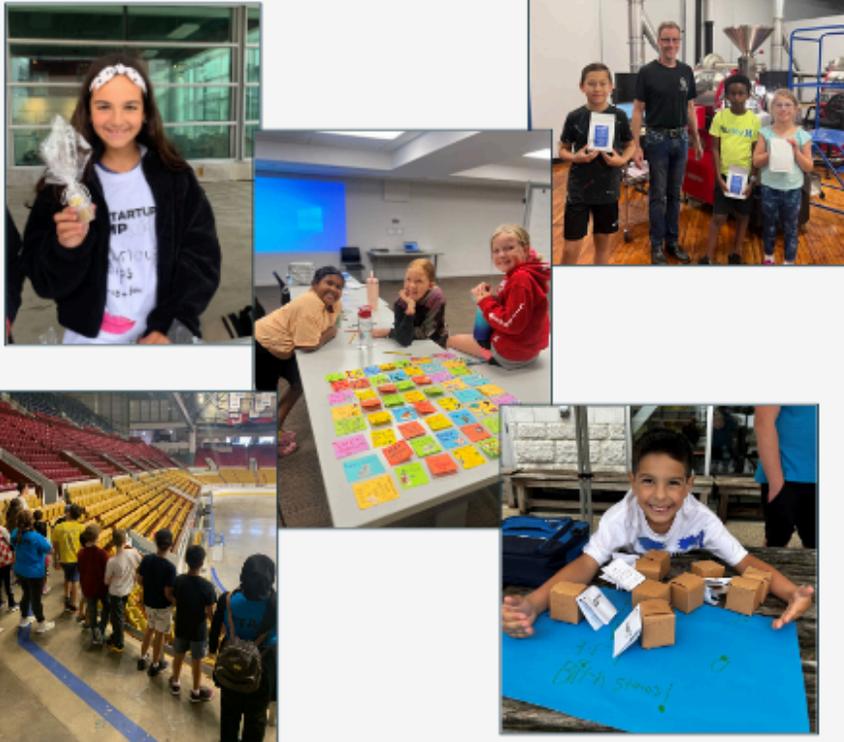
# Highlights

## JA Camp Startup

Our campers in London and Kitchener had an exciting experience running their very own businesses!

In this one-week summer day camp, campers created and operated a business of their own. Campers chose a product idea, produced their product, created a sales pitch, and put their sales skills to the test in JA's camp market.

**See some of our 2023 summer campers in this newsreel from CBC.**



## JA Company Program

Our JA Company Program students spent 18 weeks working intently on the businesses they formed together at JA. Along the way, they learned practical and interpersonal skills, and made some incredible connections to help them in the future.

**One of the best moments of the year was the *Dragon's Lair* pitch competition and tradeshow, where the JA Companies came together to share their products and ideas!**



# Highlights

## London and District Business Hall of Fame

JA South Western Ontario

jaswo.org/LBHF

THE 33<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL LONDON AND DISTRICT **BUSINESS HALL OF FAME**

*Gala*

OCTOBER 25, 2023  
RBC PLACE LONDON  
5:00 PM

HONOURING 2023 LAUREATES

ALLAN DREWLO  
President,  
Drewlo Holdings

JILL WILCOX  
Owner,  
Jill's Table

INNOVATE SPONSOR  
Libro

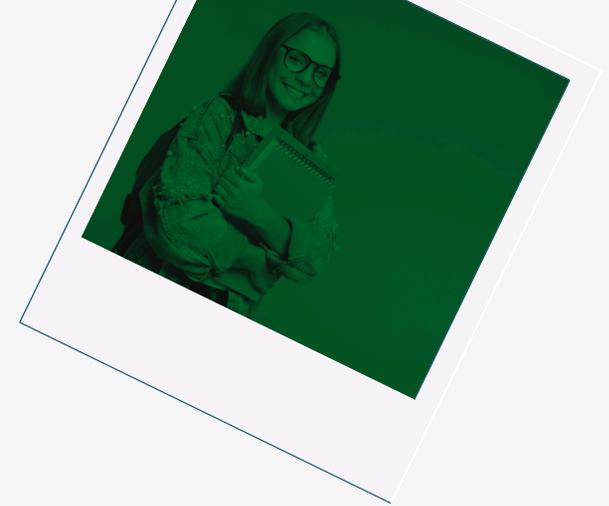
We were thrilled to induct two outstanding leaders into the London and District Business Hall of Fame this year. **Allan Drewlo** has emerged as one of Southwestern Ontario's foremost figures in the real estate development and property management industry and **Jill Wilcox** has created a beloved destination for foodies, home cooks, and professional chefs as well as authoring food columns and six cookbooks.

Their work continues to inspire us. Thank you to all who joined us for the Gala Celebration. All profits from the event go to support relevant hands-on learning through JA.



# Highlights

## Waterloo Region Entrepreneur Hall of Fame



**WATERLOO REGION**  
**ENTREPRENEUR**  
**HALL OF FAME**

**MAY 8TH, 2024**  
**5:00PM**  
GALA CELEBRATION  
BALLROOM @ BINGEMANS CONFERENCE CENTRE  
KITCHENER, ON

**HONOURING 2024 LAUREATES**

**Mike Kropp & Robert Harris**  
Co-Founders, PEER Group

**Eldon Sprickerhoff**  
Founder, eSentire

**Sherry Shannon-Vanstone & Scott Vanstone (posthumous)**  
Co-Founders, TrustPoint Innovation Technologies, Ltd.



We had a wonderful gala ceremony bringing our newest Laureates into the Waterloo region Entrepreneur Hall of Fame. They serve as a tremendous inspiration to all of the young entrepreneurs gaining skills through JA!

Mike Kropp & Robert Harris, Co-Founders of PEER Group, have **transformed the utilization of factory automation software**, revolutionizing the semiconductor industry with reusable solutions.

Eldon Sprickerhoff, Founder of eSentire, serves as **an example of excellence in the cybersecurity field**, leveraging his expertise to safeguard businesses against evolving threats.

Sherry Shannon-Vanstone & Scott Vanstone (posthumous), Co-Founders of TrustPoint Innovation Technologies, Ltd., epitomize the spirit of entrepreneurship, with **a legacy defined by ground breaking achievements in information security and technological innovation.**



# Highlights

## Celebrating 60 Years!

What a gift it has been to bring relevant hands-on learning to students in Southwestern Ontario for the past 60 years! We spent the year connecting with Alumni, gathering stories and advice to support students because ***The Next 60 Starts Here.***

We were also grateful to receive the support of **generous donors from our community** who believe in the boundless potential of youth and know that JA works proactively to help them build a stronger future.



*"The Next 60 Starts Here" supporters Andy and Helen Spriet and Jeff Macoun, retired President and COO of Canada Life with Karen Gallant, President and CEO of JA South Western Ontario*



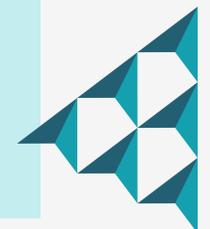
ja\_swo Jamie Crich, President of Auburn Group and an alumnus of the JA Company Program, has been a dedicated supporter of Junior Achievement for many years. When the Next 60 Starts Here Campaign was launched, he generously contributed a \$300,000 gift to support students within the organization.

"Junior Achievement provides youth with the skills and opportunities they need to be successful in their futures", said Jamie Crich. "I am grateful for my time in JA programs. The lessons I learned taught me so much that has aided in my success today."

JA South Western Ontario (JASWO) is a not-for-profit impact organization that delivers free hands-on, immersive education in work readiness, financial health, and entrepreneurship. For over 60 years, JASWO has served youth from all backgrounds, including Indigenous communities, people of colour, and at-risk populations. JASWO's real-world training helps young people develop the skills to build successful careers, prepare for the risks and rewards of entrepreneurship, and learn to thrive financially.

"Students across South Western Ontario will have access to Junior Achievement's financial health, work readiness, and entrepreneurship learning experiences thanks to the Crich family and Auburn Group." Said Heather Scott, Director, Philanthropy

@auburn\_developments



“There are an endless amount of opportunities out there work-wise including ones you create for yourself so trying different activities or skills is such a great way of deciding what you don't want to do as much as what you want to. **All of the experiences - whether it's extracurricular, work, sports or other - you collect are going to help you create a unique journey for yourself - so just keep at it.**”



**MELISSA SARIFFODEEN**



**JA ALUMNI: 2003 - 2004**

Melissa is the co-founder of Canada Learning Code helping people across Canada learn technology skills. They've created almost 1 million meaningful learning experiences for people across Canada, operate in ~30 cities across Canada and raised more than \$25M in funding from North America's leading technology and financial institutions including the first cryptocurrency donation in Canada.

# Thank you to Our Donors

You bring essential hands-on skills to students, brightening their futures and the future of our community.

**\$100K+**

**Andy & Helen Spriet**

**\$50K-\$99.9K**

The Crich Family and  
Auburn Group of  
Companies



Funded by the  
Government of Canada's  
Community Services Recovery Fund



Foundation



Toyota Motor  
Manufacturing  
Canada Inc.



# Thank you to Our Donors

You bring essential hands-on skills to students, brightening their futures and the future of our community.



**\$25K-\$49.9K**



National Partner

**\$10K-\$24.9K**



The Walter J. Blackburn Foundation



Karn Family Fund



Geddes Family Fund



Local Partner

The Ross & Doris Dixon Charitable Foundation



Region of Waterloo



WESTMINSTER COLLEGE FOUNDATION



# Thank you to Our Donors

You bring essential hands-on skills to students, brightening their futures and the future of our community.

**\$5K-\$9.9K**

Actuarial Foundation of Canada

AMEX

Brant Community Foundation

Cambridge Centre Honda

City Of Kitchener

CIVA Communications\*

Copp's Buildall

Paul Cocker and Trish Fulton

Flanagan Family Foundation

General Motors

Gordon's Gold\*

Government of Canada -  
Employment and Social Development Canada

Government of Ontario -  
Ministry of Francophone Affairs

Greening Media\*

HSBC

Dan and Katie Kelly and Family

Kindred Credit Union

The Leflar Foundation

Lerners LLP

London Public Library\*

London Community Foundation -  
Donald and Elizabeth Ness Fund

E & E McLaughlin

Next Dimension\*

Nothers The Award Store\*

Rogers TV\*

Sifton Properties Ltd.

Signature Graphics\*

Spring Tide Holdings Inc.

Voyago (Voyageur/Checker)\*

Waterloo Region Community Foundation -  
Pollock Family Fund

Xerox\*



# Thank you to Our Donors

You bring essential hands-on skills to students, brightening their futures and the future of our community.

## \$2.5K-\$4.9K

- Anonymous Donors
- Tina Bax
- Boxwoods\*
- Dunn Family Foundation
- Ernst & Young LLP
- Karen and Mike Gallant
- JA South Western Ontario Board of Directors and Staff
- KPMG - National Partner
- KPMG - Local Partner
- L.H. Gray & Son Ltd.
- London Community Foundation - Chamber of Commerce Corporate Challenge Legacy Fund
- London Inc.\*
- Mouse Renovations
- Municipality of Chatham-Kent
- Municipality of Lakeshore
- Optimist Club of Byron
- Rise Up And Soar (RUAS)
- Rotary Club of Hamilton
- Samuel W. Stedman Foundation
- Sherwood Systems
- Tabitha Schwarz and Stewart Bechthold
- Spriet Investments
- Stantec
- StarTech.com Ltd.
- Taco Bell
- Talbot Marketing\*
- The C3 Group of Companies
- Township of Centre Wellington
- Wilfrid Laurier University\*

## \$1K-\$2.49K

- Aarkel Tool and Die
- Accenture
- Amazon
- Avanade
- Aylmer Area Community Foundation
- Bluewater Power Distribution Corp.
- Centre Wellington Community Foundation
- City of Guelph
- Edgewater Financial Products
- Fairstone
- Jill and Murray Flanagan
- London Community Foundation - Barbara & John Cronyn Fund
- London Community Foundation - Ross Imrie Fund
- London Community Foundation - Vital People Grant
- Luda Pradyszczuk
- Roberts OnSite
- Rotary Club of Kitchener Westmount
- Rotary Club of Stratford
- Shopify
- Sarnia Education Centre
- The Chatham Kent Community Foundation
- Town of Ingersoll
- Township of Norwich
- Waterloo Region Community Foundation - Retired Business & Professional Men's Fund
- Waterloo Region Community Foundation - Terry Burch Fund



“The program allowed me to uncover and develop my business skills. On a personal side, overcoming challenges and succeeding in new situations infused me with confidence and built up my self-esteem. I have made valuable connections and friendships with local and international alumni, and **genuinely attribute my pursuit of purpose-driven lifestyle to key lessons I learned at JA.**”



**CRYSTAL KAYABAGGU**



**JA ALUMNI: 2007 - 2021**

Crystal is the Senior Director of Finance at Young People's Theatre and a JA Volunteer for 11 years

# Our Board of Directors

**DEREK ASKEW**  
**(CHAIR)**

*Associate Vice President, TD Bank Group*

**BRAD BISHOP**  
**(VICE CHAIR)**

*Professor, Financial Planning, Fanshawe College*

**TABITHA SCHWARZ**  
**(SECRETARY)**

*Chief Financial Officer, SpringTide Holdings*

**LUDA PRADYSZCZUK-PITT**  
**(TREASURER)**

*Associate Partner – Tax – EY*

**NOMAR ABDULLAH**

*Chief Financial Officer, FMF Metal Fabrication*

**MARK BROWN**

*Partner, adHOME Creative Inc.*

**LEONARD BUMBACCO**

*Education Officer – Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Pathway, Job Skills Programs for the Ministry of Education*

**MATTHEW CASSIDY**

*Associate, Harrison Pensa*

**MURRAY FLANAGAN**

*Advisor, Flanagan Foodservice*

**JENNIFER GREEN**

*Director of Competitions, Skills Ontario*

**FIRAS HALABI**

*Community Manager, Libro Credit Union*

**STEPHANIE HAYES**

*Partner, Gowling WLG*

**KIM MACPHERSON**

*Director of Talent Management and Organizational Development, SOTI*

**ALEX MOROZ**

*Marketing & Family Services Coordinator, Hamilton Municipal Cemeteries*

**PHILIPPE N. OILLE**

*Amazon Web Services (AWS) Senior Partner Sales Manager, FSI*



**NICOLE PEREIRA**

*President and CEO, Dealer Principal, Cambridge Centre Honda*

**VENKAT RAMACHANDRAN**

*Director/Senior Manager Business Architecture Trading and Asset Servicing, Wealth, TD Bank Group*

**WES VICKERS**

*Educator, Greater Essex County District School Board*

**BRAD GEDDES**  
**(DIRECTOR EMERITUS)**

*President and Chief Executive Officer, Zucora Home*



# Meet the Team

## **KAREN GALLANT**

*President & CEO*

## **JENNE WASON**

*Director, Marketing and Communications / Regional Director*

## **CLAUDIA VILLATORO**

*Program Manager - Thames Valley (Middlesex, Oxford, Elgin), Brant Haldimand Norfolk, Bruce-Grey*

## **MANDY DEELSTRA**

*Volunteer Manager*

## **KAREN CHAFE**

*Director, Programs and Operations*

## **ALICIA GALL**

*Community Projects and Partnerships Manager*

## **MORISSA EWING**

*Program Manager – Windsor-Essex, Chatham-Kent, Sarnia-Lambton, Huron-Perth*

## **NATHAN FRENCH**

*Marketing & Communications Coordinator*

## **HEATHER J. SCOTT, CFRE**

*Director, Philanthropy*

## **SHEENA GOSSE**

*Program Manager – Waterloo Region, Wellington, Hamilton, Niagara*

## **ZOE BURNES**

*Program Manager - Company Program and Camps*

## **OWYN PALMER**

*Philanthropy Coordinator*



“As an Achiever, JA taught me the value of hard work, persistence, and team work. Learning to work in a group towards a common goal, addressing team challenges, and **staying resilient in the face of setbacks** are just a few of the key traits I learned and honed at JA.

JA continues to be a huge part of my life and my success!”

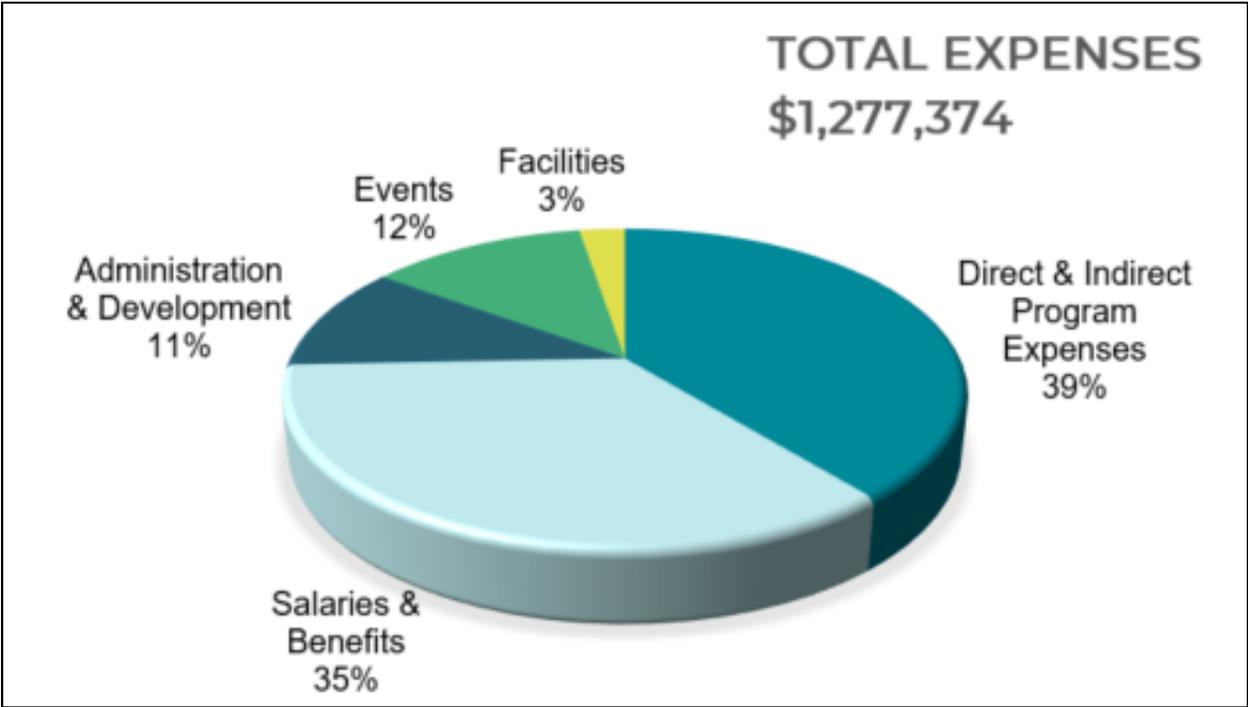
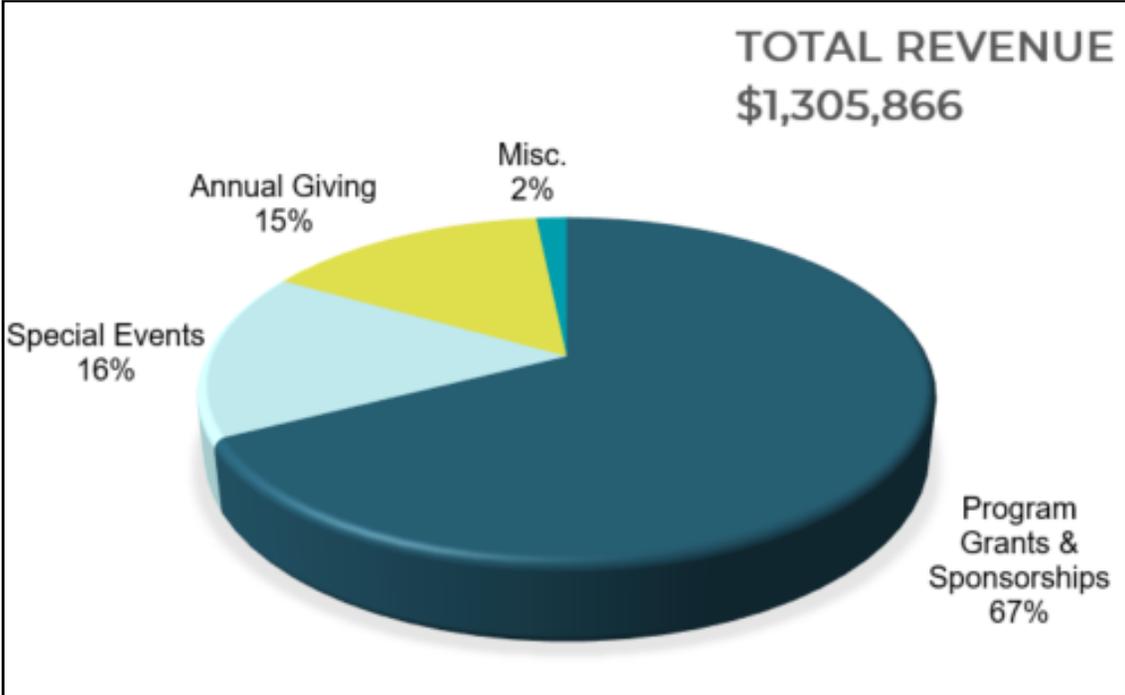
**OMAR HAMID**



**JA ALUMNI: 1991 - 1994**

Omar is currently completing his EMBA and is Director of Sales at McLean Co. As a volunteer over the past 28 years, he's had the pleasure and honor to work with amazing Achievers, Volunteers and Sponsors. Volunteering with JA has also continued to help Omar grow as a leader, business professional, and as a person.

# Our Financials



# Thank you

We are so grateful to everyone who helped incorporate JA into the student experience. We hope you and all of the students in your life had a memorable and inspiring school year!

**THANK YOU to our Educators** for bringing JA learning experiences into your classroom, sharing additional programs with your students, and for everything else you do to give students a brighter future.

**THANK YOU to our Volunteers** who not only allow exponential growth in the number of students we can reach, but also bring your own expertise and perspective to make each student experience much richer.

**THANK YOU to our Donors and Sponsors.** Since JA receives no regular government funding, it's these incredible people and organizations who provide the support for each and every program to happen!

**THANK YOU to our Students.** Your hard work and openness to learning new essential skills inspire us every day.



**JA**  
**South Western**  
**Ontario**

Member of JA Canada

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**jaswo.org**

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 @jaswontario  
 company/jaswo



**60** Years of  
Empowering  
Lives

*The next 60 starts here.*