

2024-2025
ANNUAL
REPORT



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Derek Askew
Chair, Board of Directors



Karen Gallant
President and CEO

Junior Achievement South Western Ontario is a charitable organization with a simple but powerful mission: to inspire and prepare young people to succeed in a global economy. By working closely with educators and the business community, we help students gain the knowledge and skills they need in financial health, work readiness, and entrepreneurship, which form the foundation for a strong and resilient future.

Last year, we delivered approximately 30,000 JA learning experiences across Southwestern Ontario. Each one represents a moment of possibility, where a student discovers their potential, builds confidence, and sees new opportunities for their future. This impact is made possible by our dedicated volunteers, educators, donors, and staff. Thank you for believing in the power of this work.

Several moments from the past year stand out. We reached more underserved schools than ever before, with JA programs running in 52 schools, surpassing our goal of 32. These students gained mentorship and skills that helped them imagine brighter futures in ways they might not have experienced otherwise.

Another highlight comes from our Company Program, where student teams create and run their own businesses. The Hamilton team, Cherish 'n Care, was named our local Company of the Year and went on to earn Social Enterprise of the Year at the national level. Their business combined creativity, compassion, and community impact, showing the kind of leadership that will shape the future.

What connects these stories is a shared belief that true success is about more than achievement. It is about resilience, relationships, and lifting others as we rise. Together, we are creating opportunities that help young people realize their potential and prepare for the challenges and possibilities ahead.

With gratitude,

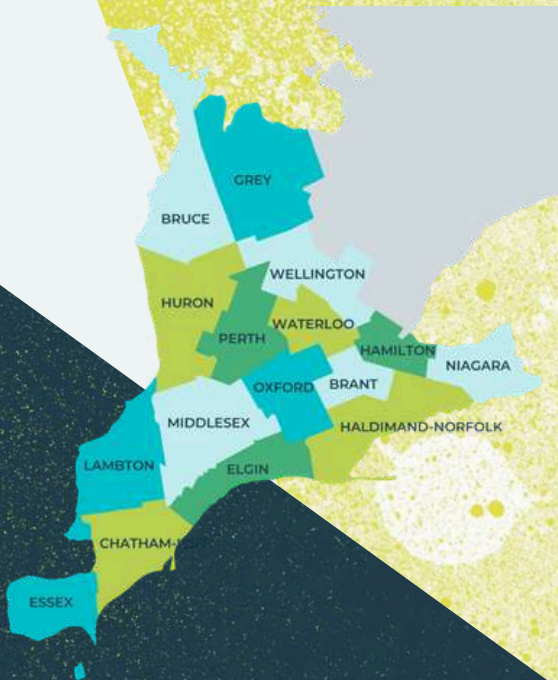
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A
MESSAGE
FROM THE
BOARD CHAIR &
PRESIDENT AND CEO

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.



You can build a brighter future.



**FINANCIAL HEALTH
WORK READINESS
ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Volunteer to bring relevant hands-on learning to local students.



BE A GAME CHANGER

**GET INVOLVED IN
JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT!**

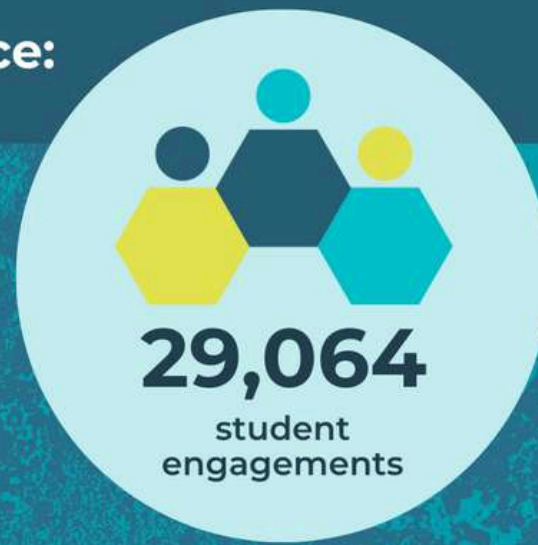
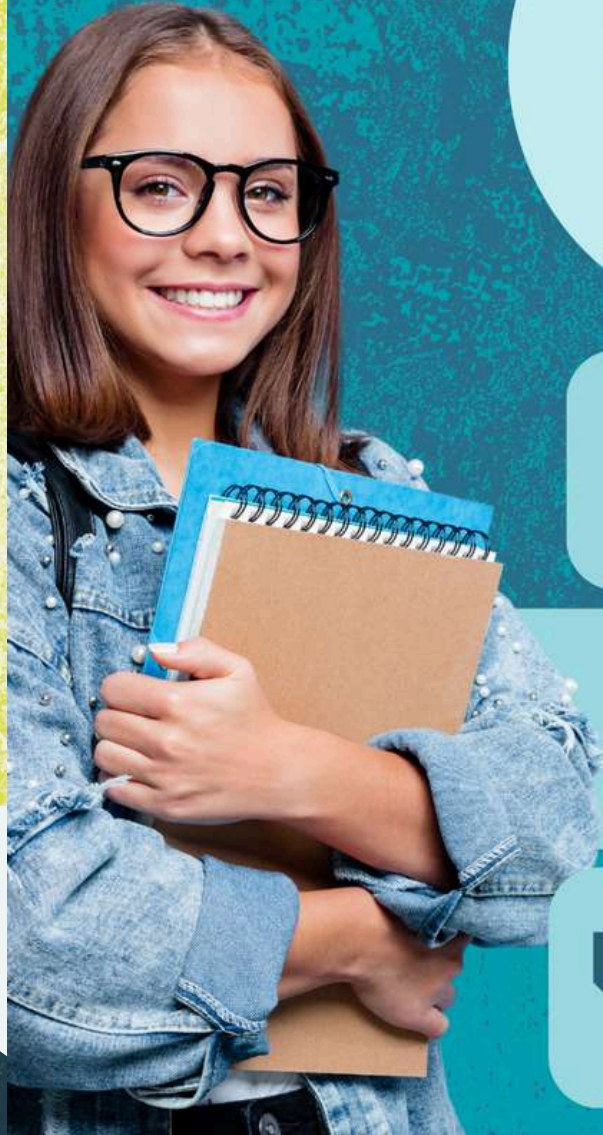
jaswo.org/volunteer



**TOGETHER,
WE ARE JA**

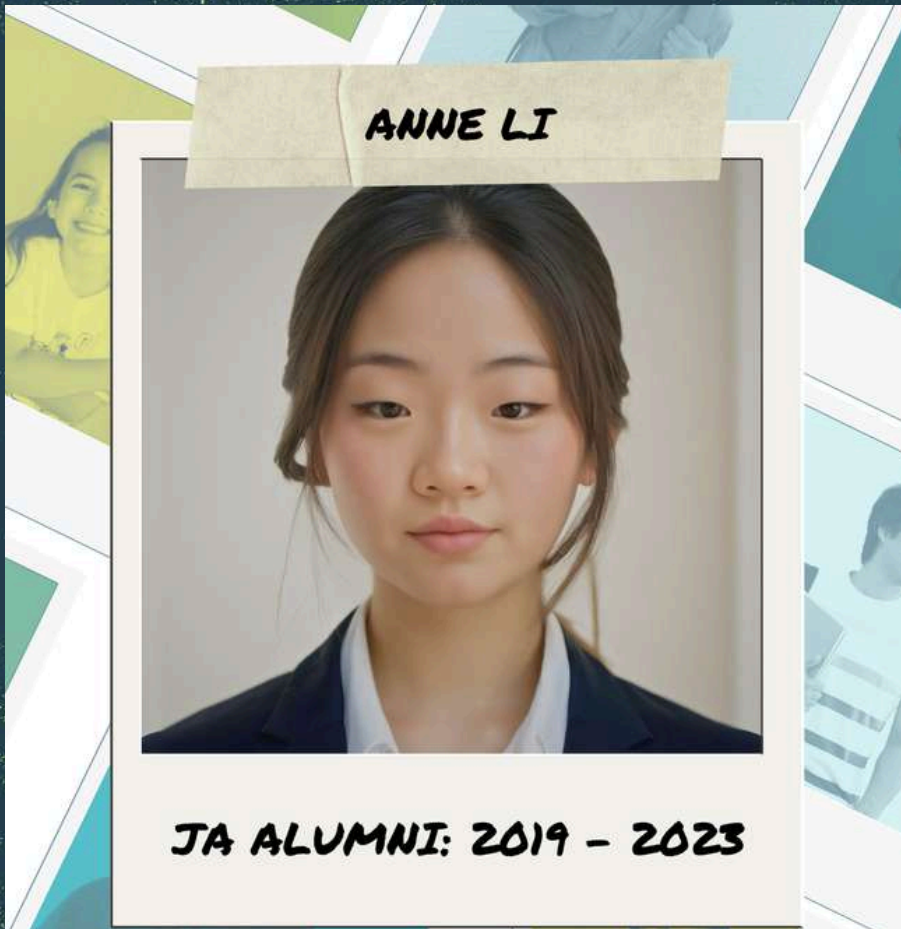


Impact at a Glance: 2024-2025



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OUR IMPACT
2024-2025 BY THE NUMBERS



My JA experience has provided me with various opportunities and skills that I use today. For example, **JA didn't just teach me about starting a business, it taught me the personal skills and life skills I need for the future.** Things like communication, leadership, logical thinking, and the willpower to experience struggles and hardship. All these skills apply to my current and future successes.

Anne Li is currently studying a double major in Marketing and Sociology at Brescia University College at Western University.

Anne participated in the JA Company Program each year during her high school education and has shared that her JA experience allowed her to be part of some amazing opportunities, and helped her love entrepreneurship.

ANNE'S ADVICE FOR STUDENTS

“Sometimes the struggle is part of the process and you need to be able to overcome it to see how far you’ve come.”

Read more JA Alumni stories: jaswo.org/ja-alumni-yearbook/

CAREER EXPLORATION THROUGH CAREER HUNT

This year, JA Career Hunt helped **5,589 Grade 7-12 students** explore future possibilities by connecting directly with professionals in the field. Through **interactive, mentor-led sessions, 225 classes** gained first-hand insight into a wide range of careers, learned what skills are needed to succeed, and left with a clearer sense of their own educational and career pathways.

Students participated in dozens of Career Breakout Sessions, meeting **68 mentors** from diverse industries and joining the conversations that interested them most. The event also featured inspirational mainstage speakers, moderated live chats where students asked thoughtful questions, and a Career Expo offering additional mentor videos.

Across all sessions, students reported feeling more informed, more confident, and more prepared to take the next steps toward their future.



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HIGHLIGHTS
CAREER HUNT VIRTUAL EVENTS



10.24.24
@RBC Place London

34TH ANNUAL GALA

680
ATTENDEES

26
SPONSORS

\$199,000
TOTAL RAISED THROUGH THE EVENT

2
INSPIRING LAUREATES

Ryan Finch
President,
Finch Auto Group

Steve Copp
President,
Copp's Buildall

1
NEW AWARD
ANNOUNCED FOR 2025:
THE INNOVATOR AWARD

1200
STUDENT LEARNING
EXPERIENCES SUPPORTED

JA South Western Ontario
Member of JA Canada

Financial Health
Work Readiness
Entrepreneurship

BY THE NUMBERS



CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AS COPP AND FINCH ARE INDUCTED INTO HALL OF FAME

On October 24, 2024, business and community leaders came together for a memorable evening at the 34th Annual London and District Business Hall of Fame Gala, celebrating the achievements of this year's laureates, Ryan Finch, President of Finch Auto Group, and Steve Copp, President of Copp's Buildall. The event honoured their exceptional leadership, entrepreneurial spirit, and lasting impact on the London and District community.

The Gala raised an impressive \$199,000 in gross revenue to support JA South Western Ontario's financial health, work readiness, and entrepreneurship learning experiences. Thanks to the generosity of sponsors, supporters, and attendees, these funds are helping bring JA programs to more students across Southwestern Ontario and inspiring the next generation of business and community leaders.



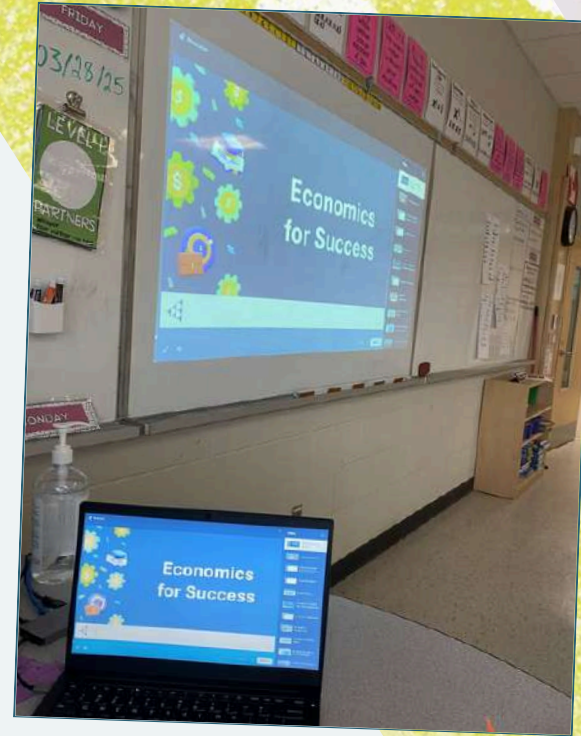
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LONDON AND DISTRICT BUSINESS HALL OF FAME

BUILDING FINANCIAL CONFIDENCE ACROSS SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO

Throughout the year, JA South Western Ontario's **financial health programs** empowered students with essential skills to manage money, make informed decisions, and plan for their futures. Delivered through a combination of volunteer-led and teacher-led learning experiences, these programs connected real-world knowledge to classroom learning across the region.

In total, **12,054 students** in **454 classrooms** participated in JA financial literacy programs, supported by **366 volunteer assignments**. A highlight of the year was Western University's Impact Week, during which **26 Western students** in small groups delivered 21 financial literacy programs across 11 schools in London. Together, these efforts reflect our commitment to building financial confidence and capability among young people throughout Southwestern Ontario.

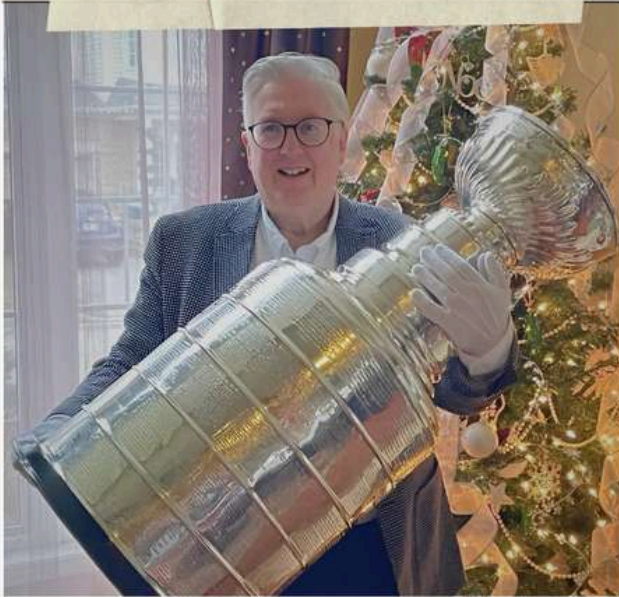


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HIGHLIGHTS
FINANCIAL HEALTH
LEARNING EXPERIENCES



KEVIN SHEA



JA ALUMNI: 1970 - 1974

Kevin Shea is the Editorial and Education Manager at the Hockey Hall of Fame. Kevin previously attended the University of Windsor, earning his degree in Communications and English. While attending school, he worked full-time at the local radio station (CKWW), which led to a ten-year radio career following graduation.

Kevin was a JA Company Program Participant (1970-1974) and was a JA staff member (1974-1981) in Windsor.

I was a shy kid with few life experiences outside my small town. **Junior Achievement opened up new horizons for me**, meeting people from all across the city and **drawing out leadership qualities in me** that I never knew I had. Equally important, JA sparked an idea in me about the career I wanted to pursue.

KEVIN'S ADVICE FOR STUDENTS

**“Be open-minded to ideas.
Be resilient.”**

INSPIRING STUDENTS WITH A WORLD OF CHOICES

This year, JA South Western Ontario delivered in-person World of Choices career events in Chatham-Kent, Hamilton, and Sarnia-Lambton, giving students in-depth opportunities to explore future pathways through conversations with local professionals. Through these events, **595 students connected with 83 career mentors**, discovering opportunities in a wide range of fields around themes like Caring Careers and Jobs of the Future.

We also provided Skilled Trades & Tech Summits at Conestoga College and Niagara College, engaging **188 students in hands-on exploration of in-demand careers**. These experiences demonstrated the impact of real-world insight and mentorship in helping youth imagine what's possible.

Thank you to the mentors, educators, sponsors, and students who made these events a success and helped open a true world of choices.



Chatham-Kent Career Mentors



Sarnia-Lambton Career Mentors



Hamilton Career Mentors



HIGHLIGHTS

WORLD OF CHOICES EVENTS



FLANAGAN FAMILY HONOURED AT 2025 WATERLOO REGION ENTREPRENEUR HALL OF FAME GALA

On May 13, 2025, the Flanagan family—Joe (posthumously), Dee, Rick, Dan, Jeff, and Murray—were inducted into the Waterloo Region Entrepreneur Hall of Fame at Bingemans Conference Centre. The evening celebrated **nearly five decades of leadership at Flanagan Foodservice**, Canada’s largest Canadian-owned foodservice distributor, and the family’s lasting community impact through their charitable foundation. Proceeds raised from the event support JA South Western Ontario.

Emceed by Mike Farwell, the Gala featured a tribute video, remarks from Murray Flanagan, musical performances, a silent auction, and the launch of the inaugural Legacy Leaders Challenge. Our President & CEO Karen Gallant highlighted the impact of the youth learning experiences delivered last year, and the organization also announced the **2026 debut of the Innovator Award** to honor entrepreneurs driving regional change.

WATCH NOW

INNOVATE SPONSOR
CWB
Canadian Western Bank

WATERLOO REGION
ENTREPRENEUR
HALL OF FAME

HONOURING LAUREATES



The Flanagan Family
(Joe, Dee, Rick, Dan, Jeff & Murray)
Flanagan Foodservice

BY THE NUMBERS

215 ATTENDEES

\$67,000 TOTAL RAISED THROUGH THE EVENT

1 NEW AWARD ANNOUNCED FOR 2026: THE INNOVATOR AWARD

880 STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES SUPPORTED

IN SUPPORT OF:
JA South Western Ontario



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HIGHLIGHTS

ENTREPRENEUR HALL OF FAME



FROM IDEAS TO IMPACT AT JA COMPANY PROGRAM

Our JA Company Program continued to inspire young entrepreneurs through hands-on, experiential learning. This year, **196 students** formed **14 student-led companies**, supported by **51 volunteer mentors**. Highlights included the launch of the Company Program Social Media Challenge, featuring two weeks of themed promotional activities, and the Dragon's Lair Pitch Competition, where students demonstrated creativity, confidence, and business insight.

A key milestone was the successful **relaunch of the Company Program in Hamilton** after a 15-year absence, made possible through a partnership with the DeGroote School of Business. The Hamilton-based company, **Cherish n' Care**, won the Southwestern Ontario regional competition and advancing to the national Company of the Year finals, where they **won the Social Enterprise category**. Their success reflects the collaborative, community-focused spirit at the heart of the JA Company Program.



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HIGHLIGHTS
JA COMPANY PROGRAM



IT ONLY TAKES A MOMENT TO BUILD A SKILL

JA South Western Ontario continued to prioritize **Quick Inspirations** as an effective way to reach more students through short, interactive learning experiences. These sessions introduce real-world topics such as budgeting through *Keep Your Balance*, financial safety through *Scam Smarts*, money fundamentals through *Curious About Currency*, and entrepreneurship concepts through *JA Bizcraft*.

This year, Quick Inspirations reached **8,396 students**. By focusing on this flexible delivery model, we're engaging more young people and sparking interest in future learning around financial health, work readiness. and entrepreneurship.



Try our Quick Inspirations
Online learning experiences in 30 minutes or less

What do I need to know about currency?

jaswo.org/quick-inspirations

Try our Quick Inspirations
Online learning experiences in 30 minutes or less

Your Post-Secondary Questions Answered

jaswo.org/quick-inspirations

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HIGHLIGHTS

INSPIRE, PREPARE, SUCCEED





At 19, I was elected to a student government position overseeing a 1.4 million annual budget. I also help startup Tomorrow Media (now called TMRRW), which is now a successful creative agency in Sarnia led by Liwordson V. **JA taught me the fundamentals of the professional world. Without the experiences of JA, I would not have had the opportunities to be successful in my field of work.**



Graham was a JA Company Program Participant in Sarnia between 2009-2013.

Graham is a Council and Committee Coordinator at Professional Engineers Ontario, which governs over 91,000 licence and certificate holders, grants temporary, limited and provisional licences to practise professional engineering, and authorises businesses to provide engineering services to the public.

In addition to his full-time job, he is a freelance Political Consultant who assists political candidates at the municipal, provincial and federal levels.

GRAHAM'S ADVICE FOR STUDENTS

“The JA Company Program is an amazing resource for secondary school students to prepare themselves for the real world. It opened a lot of doors that, looking back, I wouldn’t have been able to achieve without the skills I gained from JA.”

Read more JA Alumni stories: jaswo.org/ja-alumni-yearbook/

Thank you to Our Major Gift Donors & Sponsors

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



16

OUR SUPPORTERS



Thank you to Our Major Gift Donors & Sponsors

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

\$25K-\$49.9K



**SOLCZ FAMILY
FOUNDATION**



**TD READY
COMMITMENT**



17

OUR SUPPORTERS



Thank you to Our Donors & Sponsors

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

\$10K-\$24.9K



THE LARRY MYNY INVESTMENT GROUP



Geddes Family Fund



The Ross and Doris Dixon Charitable Foundation



Experience. The Difference.™



Region of Waterloo



WATERLOO REGION Community Foundation



WESTMINSTER COLLEGE FOUNDATION

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OUR SUPPORTERS

STEPHEN MCCABE



JA ALUMNI: 2005 - 2012

Stephen McCabe is the CEO of Northern Devs, a software development company, and Co-Founder of QuickCasa an AI lead qualification company for real estate and leasing professionals.

Since a young age, Stephen has had an entrepreneurial mindset, which drove him to run small businesses during high school. Since then, he has been a part of numerous tech startups, with the experience culminating in his companies today. Now he helps other businesses succeed through tech development and support.

My journey with JA has been an adventure, **laying the groundwork for my entrepreneurial spirit and teaching me the joy of transforming ideas into reality.** From selling energy drinks in high school to leading tech startups, JA instilled in me a **deep understanding of business fundamentals and the importance of teamwork and adaptability.**

These experiences **shaped my professional path and fueled my passion for mentoring and guiding fellow entrepreneurs with warmth and enthusiasm.**

STEPHEN'S ADVICE FOR STUDENTS

“Just try it. I wish I had taken some chances and tried some programs that I was curious about. As an unsure and anxious kid in high school, I didn’t jump for some truly unique experiences that I now regret missing.”

Thank you to Our Donors & Sponsors

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

\$5K-\$9.9K

The Actuarial Foundation of Canada

Cambridge Centre Honda

CGC

CIRA

CIVA Communications*

City of Kitchener

Copp's Buildall

Government of Canada - Canada Summer Jobs

Hamilton Community Foundation - Edith Turner Foundation

The Leflar Foundation

E&E McLaughlin Ltd.

Little Mushroom Catering

London Community Foundation - Donald and Elizabeth Ness Fund

Luxnglow Candles*

PEER Group

SpringTide Holdings

Waterloo Region Community Foundation - Pollock Family Fund

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OUR SUPPORTERS



Thank you to Our Donors & Sponsors

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

\$2.5K-\$4.9K

Angela Abdallah

Amazon Canada

AMEX

ARLANXEO

Adam Bain

Boxwoods*

Brant Community Foundation

The C3 Group of Companies

The Chatham-Kent Community Foundation

Ernst & Young LLP

Gift Funds Canada - Dunn Family Foundation

Karen and Mike Gallant

KPMG MSLP

McMaster University*

Alex Moroz

Mouse Renovations

Municipality of Chatham-Kent

Optimist Club of Byron

by Sean Lyn*

PricewaterhouseCoopers

David Rawlings

RBC

Rotary Club of Hamilton

St. Clair College*

Samuel W. Stedman Foundation

Spriet Investments

Waterloo Region Community Foundation -

Lyle Hallman Kids to Camp

Whitney & Company Realty Limited Brokerage

Wilfrid Laurier University*

Zucora Home

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OUR SUPPORTERS



Thank you to Our Donors & Sponsors

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

\$1K-\$2.49K

Abundance Canada - Wagner Fund Programs Grant

Avanade

Aylmer & Area Chamber of Commerce

Bluewater Power Distribution Corp

Chatham-Kent Community Foundation

Coca-Cola Bottling Limited

The Coca-Cola Company

Edgewater Financial Products

Fairstone Financial

Murray Flanagan

Grand Renewable Wind

Imperial Oil

Kitchener-Conestoga Rotary Club

Larry Babcock Family Fund (CKCF)

London Community Foundation

- Acorn Programs Grant
- B & J Cronyn General Grant
- J. Douglas Earthy Community Award
- Ross Imrie General Grant
- Vital People Grant

North Kent Wind

Nothers The Award Store

Emily O'Neill-Larsen*

Pita Pit - Chatham (Upland Holdings Inc.)*

Rotary Club of Kitchener-Westmount

St. Clair College*

Sarnia Education Centre

Tabitha Schwarz

Signature Graphics*

South Kent Wind

Sugar Bloom*

Sunlife Financial

Talbot Marketing*

TD

Tek Savvy Solutions Inc.

Township of North Dumfries

Waterloo Region Community Foundation

- Retired Business & Professional Men's General Grant
- Terry Burch Fund

* = Gift-in-Kind Supporter

We are deeply grateful to the many generous supporters whose contributions at every level make our work possible. Although we are unable to list every name, please know your support is truly valued and appreciated.



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OUR SUPPORTERS

PIRIYA KARTHIKEYAN



JA ALUMNI: 1997 - 2000

Piriya Karthikeyan is a Program Manager with AVEVA, an information technology consulting company.

Piriya is also a Board Director with Junior Achievement South Western Ontario.

My experience with JA from grade 9 to 12 has been **instrumental in shaping my success**. During those formative years, I developed a wide range of skills and knowledge through hands-on experience in building and marketing products. These activities taught me essential business and leadership skills, from product development to sales strategies.

The **transformative impact of JA is evident in the way it ingrained in me a strong foundation of entrepreneurial thinking and problem-solving abilities**. In summary, the skills, lessons, and values I gained from JA have been pivotal to my professional journey, **shaping me into a strategic, resilient, and community-oriented leader**.

PIRIYA'S ADVICE FOR STUDENTS

“My advice to high school students is to seize every opportunity that comes your way. We are fortunate to have access to numerous opportunities that might not be available in other parts of the world. Build your connections, start small, start early, and start now!”

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

Student Achievement Consultant, Waterloo Catholic District School Board

MATTHEW CASSIDY

Associate, Harrison Pensa

**MURRAY FLANAGAN
(DIRECTOR EMERITUS)**

Advisor, Flanagan Foodservice

**BRAD GEDDES
(DIRECTOR EMERITUS)**

President and Chief Executive Officer, Zucora Home

JENNIFER GREEN

Director of Competitions, Skills Ontario

STEPHANIE HAYES

Partner, Gowling WLG

KIM MACPHERSON

Director of Talent Management and Organizational Development, SOTI

JENNIFER MATTHEWS

Vice President, Tech Alliance

PIRIYA KARTHIKEYAN

Product Manager, Aveva

ALEX MOROZ

Marketing & Family Services Coordinator, Hamilton Municipal Cemeteries

PHILIPPE N. OILLE

MARIA PHILLIPS

Marketing Director, Libro Credit Union

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

24+

OUR BOARD



Meet the Team

KAREN GALLANT

President & CEO

KAREN CHAFE

Director, Programs and Operations

JENNE WASON

*Director, Marketing and
Communications / Regional Director*

ALICIA GALL

*Community Projects and Partnerships
Manager*

MANDY DEELSTRA

Volunteer Manager

SHEENA GOSSE

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

MORISSA EWING

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

CLAUDIA VILLATORO

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

JOHN WILSON

*Program Manager -
Company Program and Camps*

MEGAN SIDDALL

*Philanthropy and Communications
Coordinator*



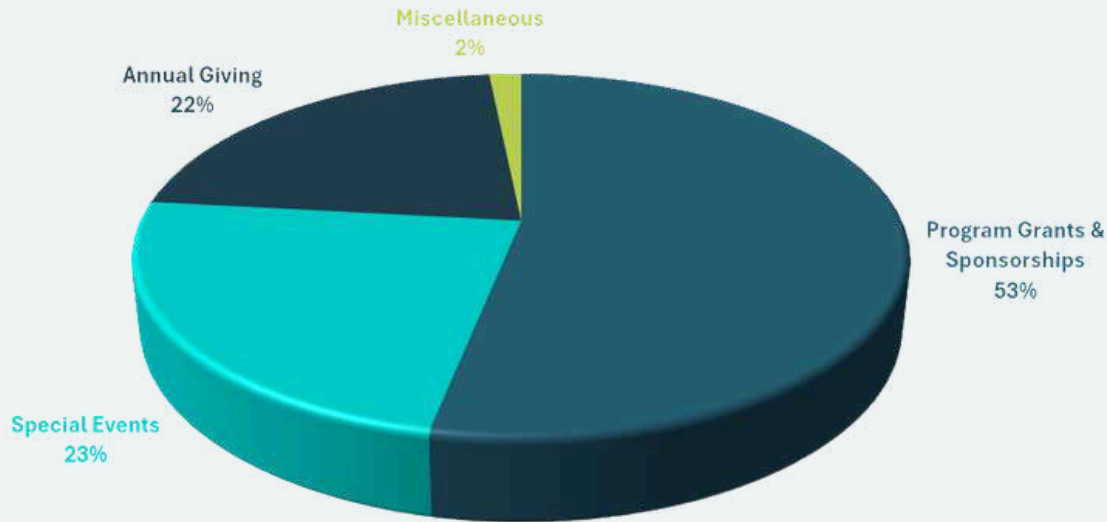
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OUR STAFF



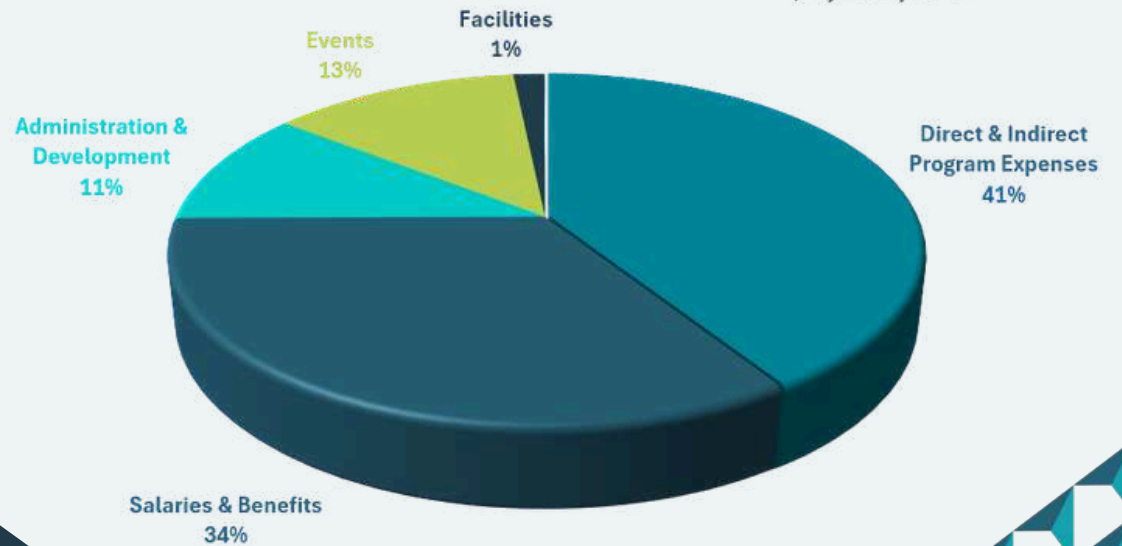
2024-2025 Revenue & Expenses

TOTAL REVENUE
\$1,392,927



Note: Total revenue includes \$312,722 gain on sale of capital asset

TOTAL EXPENSES
\$1,282,078



CHANTELLE BILODEAU-SETON



JA ALUMNI: 2006 - 2009

Chantelle was a JA Company Program Participant in Chatham-Kent between 2006-2009.

Chantelle is the CEO of Eternity's Touch Inc., the exclusive provider of meaningful Fingerprint Keepsakes to the funeral profession. They partner with Funeral Homes to implement technology that captures digital fingerprint images of the deceased and work closely with Funeral Directors to offer these personalised keepsakes to client families as lasting mementoes of their loved ones.

JA played a significant role in shaping my success by **providing a solid foundation and early, realistic exposure** to the world of business and independent entrepreneurship. Through the JA Company Program, I didn't just learn theory—I **gained firsthand experience in running a business, making decisions, leading teams, and navigating challenges.**

Those years gave me the **confidence to step into real-world entrepreneurship**, equipped with both skills and mindset. The program demystified business ownership and made it feel tangible and achievable.

CHANTELLE'S ADVICE FOR STUDENTS

“My biggest advice to high school students is this: don't rush into deciding your future—explore. Even though it can feel like there's pressure to choose a career path early, now is actually the time to experiment, learn, and see what truly sparks your interest.”

Read more JA Alumni stories: jaswo.org/ja-alumni-yearbook/

THANK YOU!

This year's impact was made possible through a community working together to prepare students for life beyond the classroom. Educators brought JA into their classrooms, volunteers shared real-world insights, and donors and sponsors provided vital support.

Most importantly, students showed curiosity, resilience, and a willingness to try something new. Together, you helped create opportunities that build skills, confidence, and hope for the future.



JA
South Western
Ontario

Member of JA Canada

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Regional Office (Kitchener)

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Kitchener, ON, N2H 2H3



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@jaswontario



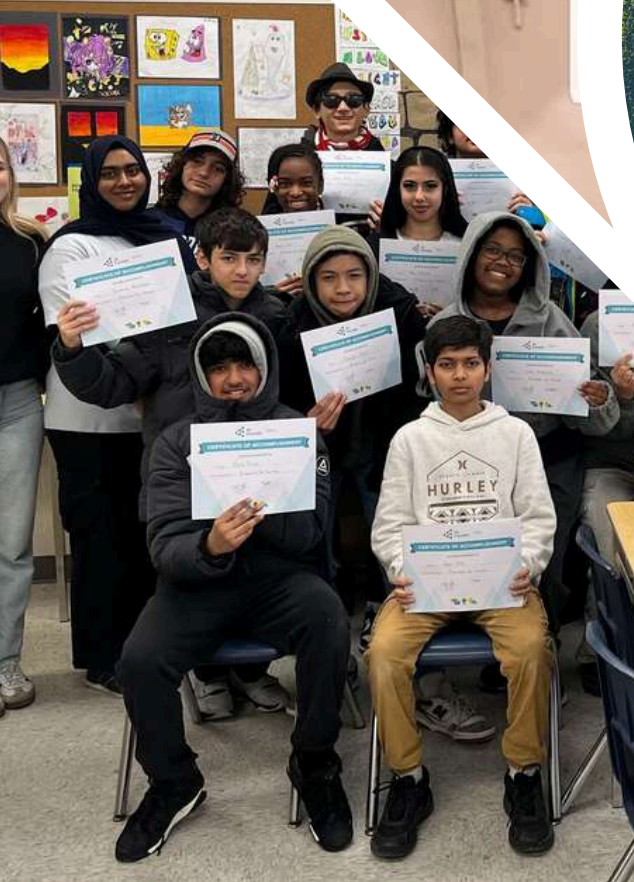
company/jaswo

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WRAP-UP

jaswo.org





JA
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START HERE.

