

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

APRIL 24-30, 2022

Volunteering is empathy in action.

Here are a few of our incredible volunteers sharing why they volunteer for JA and what they've learned along the way. We hope you enjoy reading more about their experiences!

If you want to share more about your JA volunteer experience, please email us at info@jaswo.org.

THANK YOU



JAVOLUNTEERS



Ismail Aravai

FSU STUDENT LIFE COORDINATOR / SUPERVISOR / STUDENT

Volunteers for: A Business of Our Own, Our Business World

HI, MY NAME IS ISMAIL.

I am currently doing my Postgrad in Business Management. I work at Fanshawe Student Union as a Student Life Coordinator and Supervisor at Shoppers. I am detail-oriented with around five years of administrative experience. I was also a Business Manager concentrating on supporting cross-functional teams to increase customer satisfaction through process and quality improvements, have an exceptional knowledge of developing strategic plans for business, strong communication skills developed through over five years of work experience and education, Excellent knowledge in business, creative and IT field.



WHY JA?

In this ongoing pandemic, I landed as an international student in Canada from India. This community really made me feel home far from home. I wanted to give back to community, that's when I got to know about JA from my friend who was already volunteering with JA.

HOW HAS VOLUNTEERING WITH JA IMPACTED YOU?

It's a good feeling, when you volunteer. I moved here almost 1 ½ year back and the support I got from people here is amazing. JA gave me the opportunity to do something back for my community here. This has for sure improved my communication skills.

WHAT'S A MEMORABLE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF YOUR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE?

Being able to volunteer virtually. An amazing experience.

Ismail's Advice for Volunteering:
"Be confident, Be you."



Karen Martinez

FANSHAWE STUDENT UNION FINANCE COORDINATOR

Volunteers for: More than Money, Personal Finance

HELLO, MY NAME IS KAREN...

A detail-oriented finance specialist with more than 11 years of experience in corporate business and an international student from El Salvador pursuing a Business Management post-graduate diploma at Fanshawe College.

All my education has been in the financial area, as well as my work experience. Currently I'm working as the Finance Coordinator for the Fanshawe Student Union, where I provide advice to students on their personal finances, and connect them with the many available departments and resources at the college for them to have a successful student life.



WHAT'S A MEMORABLE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF YOUR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE?

Encouraging children to pursue their dreams. They feel happy and overjoyed when someone else encourages their dreams and talents. I feel that my accomplishment is making them feel valued and important, but most important, that they can do and be the future leaders/company owners in the country

WHAT'S A HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR TIME WITH JA?

I love when the students call me "miss Karen". When I was a little girl, I wanted to be a teacher, but as I grew up, I changed my plans and focus my studies and career in the financial industry.

For me, listening to those 2 words make my day, because I feel that I'm really making a difference in my community by sharing my knowledge with those young students.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO VOLUNTEER WITH JA?

I really love to answer the student questions. Every time there is something new they want to ask and learn.

In addition, I love to be part of the student's journey to success. I never had opportunities like this when I was in middle/high school, so this motivates me to offer my support to the new generations

Karen's Advice for Volunteering:

"Always be open-minded because children in grades 3 and 4 are very curious and they ask different type of question. Also, be yourself because kids love to know that you have been trying to earn money by selling lemonade or candies when you were their age"



Dan Knight

ENTREPRENEUR/CHURCH WORKER

Volunteers for: A Business of Our Own, More Than Money, Our Business World, & More

FROM DAN:

I'm a guy who got the entrepreneurship spirit from the JA Company Program who loves to help others every chance I get.

DID YOU PARTICIPATE IN JA WHERE YOU WERE IN SCHOOL?

I started in Company Program and did some pop up programs. I was fortunate enough to be selected to go to CANJAC in Montreal.



WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO VOLUNTEER WITH JA?

I love seeing the variety of programs JA has to offer and the fun way these programs are delivered.

WHAT'S A MEMORABLE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF YOUR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE?

I look back on my days as a Company Program mentor and being so proud of each and everyone of the students I had the privilege of working with.

HOW HAS VOLUNTEERING WITH JA IMPACTED YOU?

Volunteering with JA continues to teach me things as much as I'm hoping to teach the youth. Volunteering with JA impacts my life as it gives me such a sense of paying it forward to the future generation of entrepreneurs and leaders.

Dan's Advice for Volunteering:

**"Just do it! Simple as that.
You won't regret it."**



Hansen Law

PRODUCT MANAGER

Volunteers for: Dollars With Sense, Economics for Success, Personal Finance

FROM HANSEN:

I'm currently a Product Manager at a major financial institution. I'm a father of two sons (four, if you include the cat and the dog), husband of a loving wife, and went to school for astrophysics. I enjoy rock climbing, tennis, chess, piano, and video gaming in my spare time.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN VOLUNTEERING WITH JA?

9 years.



WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO VOLUNTEER WITH JA?

I absolutely love teaching and helping kids. In addition, I feel that there's a strong need in education to teach finance, savings, and credit. I feel these are important subjects that will absolutely be applicable in every youth. Currently, the only source of credit/finance teachings (whether good or bad) are passed down from parents and guardians.

WHAT'S A MEMORABLE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF YOUR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE?

At the beginning of my volunteering career, I always thought every volunteering session would be a "one-and-done" experience. I always did my best in delivering the material, however, I was fully expecting to never see these students again and always wondered the impact I was making.

After a few years of volunteering, I saw one of the students again...while I was delivering a job session for the company I work for in a career fair at Fanshawe College. They raised their hand to ask a question (or so I thought), but instead gave a statement. "I just wanted to let you know that I remember you, and YOU were the reason I went to college and take finance as a major. Now I'm excited to join the finance sector!" Brought tears to my eyes. Most memorable experience for sure.

Hansen's Advice for Volunteering:

"Have fun, be patient, and don't fret if you don't get through all the course material. What's important is student interaction, and that you're creating curiosity about finances. My motto for learning with kids is, 'You can't learn without having fun.' "



Nadia Ladak

ENTREPRENEUR

Volunteers for: Company Program

ABOUT NADIA

Nadia Ladak (she/her) is passionate about driving innovation and inspiring the next generation of entrepreneurial leaders. She is the founder of Marlow, a menstrual health brand that has created the first-ever lubricated tampon for smoother and more comfortable insertion. She is also the Ontario representative on the Startup Canada Women Advocacy Network where she participates in government roundtables to advocate for female founders. She is committed to giving back to her community through her role as a catalyst board member at Holland Bloorview Children's Hospital and as a mentor for the Junior Achievement Company Program where she provides weekly coaching to high school students as they operate their own small businesses. In her free time, you can find her reading, playing her guitar, or spending time outside biking & camping.



WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO VOLUNTEER WITH JA?

I can genuinely say that JA is the highlight of my week every week. Throughout the program, I see first-hand the growth of the students as they learn new business skills, form bonds with their team members, and personally grow as leaders. The development I see in these students through the hands-on experience they're getting motivates me to keep volunteering every week.

WHAT'S A MEMORABLE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF YOUR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE?

One of the most memorable accomplishments of my volunteer experience to date are the connections and mentorship bonds I've formed with the students in the program. Several of the students stay connected with me even after the program is done to seek advice on their university and career paths. One of the students even shared that I inspired her to pursue business school and entrepreneurship!

Nadia's Advice for Volunteering:

"My advice would be to guide, not instruct. Often as mentors, we want to step in and provide solutions to challenges right away. While it is important to steer students in the right direction and to be there to provide advice and support, it is also important to create a safe environment that allows students to make mistakes and learn from them in the process. It is a much more valuable learning experience if students can come to a solution to a problem on their own rather than just taking our instructions."



Kimberly Watters

RBC SR. MGR, REGIONAL CAPACITY PLANNING, SWO

Volunteers for: World of Choices, More than Money, Dollars with Sense, Economics for Success

FROM KIMBERLY:

I am a mom of 2 beautiful daughters and a “Nana” to 2 amazing grandchildren. I have worked for RBC for 34 years this February. I am currently the Sr. Mgr. of Regional Capacity Planning for SWO responsible for identify improvement opportunities in the efficiency, effectiveness and enablement in workforce planning and scheduling.

I love to foster environments that embrace change and learning opportunities. I thrive helping our communities prosper. I am a dedicated volunteer in the community in a variety of roles.



WHY DID YOU WANT TO VOLUNTEER WITH JA?

I had always wanted to be a teacher, educate youth, help grow and develop the future of our youth. I had volunteered with Girl Guides for a while and was looking for a new volunteer opportunity. JA seems to fit right in with my personal and work vision and values. RBC helps support initiatives that assist youth in realizing and obtaining their full potential and JA felt like it was a perfect fit.

HOW HAS VOLUNTEERING WITH JA IMPACTED YOU?

Volunteering with JA from 2020 to now, particularly during Covid, has helped fill a void. It gave me a sense of purpose and belonging. Inspiring them, helped inspire me to volunteer. Hoping to make a difference, impacting one student at a time. It made my half empty heart, fill full again.

WHAT'S A HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR TIME WITH JA?

I get all giddy excited when I see resumes or interview candidates that were previous JA participants. The ability to inspire and to watch our youth grow and plan for their futures is very rewarding.

Kimberly's Advice for Volunteering:

"To anyone considering volunteering I would say, 'Lean in, all the way'. The students will help and guide you. There is no right or wrong but there is a wonderful journey that you take together. Go inspire others to be the best version of themselves that they can be."



John Wilson

PRICING SPECIALIST AT CANADIAN TIRE

Volunteers for: Company Program

HI! I AM JOHN WILSON

I am a recent grad from Fanshawe College with a diploma in Business – Marketing. I have been volunteering with Junior Achievement Southwestern Ontario for the last four years. I love giving back to the community by volunteering. I like taking walks and playing with my cats. One of the best decisions of my life was taking a leap and joining the JA company program as a student six years ago.



HOW HAS VOLUNTEERING WITH JA IMPACTED YOU?

JA has helped me network and be confident when it comes to speaking to others in a professional manner.

WHY DID YOU WANT TO VOLUNTEER WITH JA?

I love giving back. JA has giving me so much. I was a shy quiet student in my first year of JA and had no friends in the program. 6 months later, I made plenty of lifelong friends and networked with many business professionals in the community. I wanted to be a part of the impact that JA has on others by giving my time to students who might be looking for something in their entrepreneurial pathway.

WHAT'S A MEMORABLE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF YOUR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE?

Being asked for references from students when they are applying for jobs, scholarships, or other awards feels like an accomplishment because you know that you have had an impact on a student that they want you to help them succeed further in their academic or professional career.

John's Advice for Volunteering:

"Do it! If you have any interest in entrepreneurship, volunteering, giving back, mentoring. JA is a rewarding non-profit which gives back to the youth in many different communities."



Kayla Andersen

FINANCIAL ADVISOR FOR BUSINESS

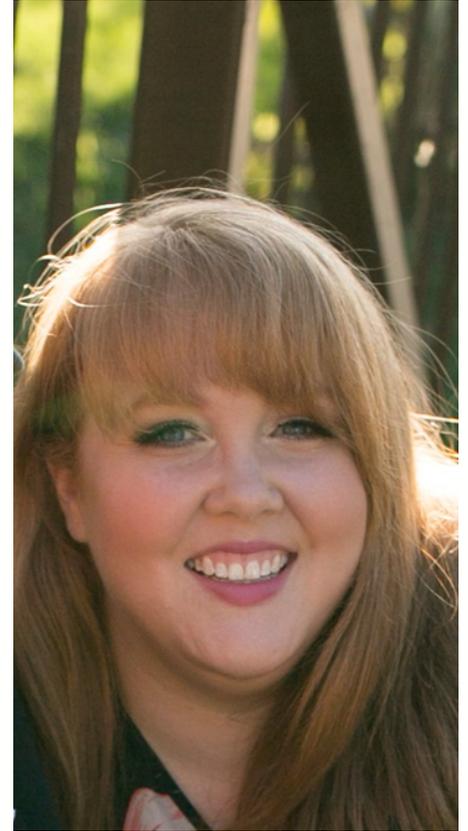
Volunteers for: A Business of our Own, Personal Finance, Dollars With Sense, Economics for Success

FROM KAYLA:

I have been working at CIBC for 9 years now in various roles from Financial Service Representative, to Banking Centre Leader to most recently Financial Advisor for Business. Finances is the number one thing that impacts so many aspects of day to life for everyone and my passion is helping my clients achieve their financial ambitions whether personal or business. When I'm not working I am spending time with my husband and our two girls Kasey and Maddy.

WHY DID YOU WANT TO VOLUNTEER WITH JA?

I see so many young people come into my office who have no idea how to manage their money or parents who are seeking advice on how to teach their kids about money. I knew firsthand how easy it is to get into post-secondary and end up in a difficult situation with debt once finished. A former client invited me to speak to their class about financial literacy and it was such an awesome experience that I wanted to connect with more students.



WHAT'S A HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR TIME WITH JA?

Each and every class I visit is a highlight. Each question is so important to each student and seeing something click in their face when they have a great idea or understand something is awesome.

DID YOU PARTICIPATE IN JA WHERE YOU WERE IN SCHOOL?

I wish!

Kayla's Advice for Volunteering:

"Do it! I worried about how I'd make it fit into an already busy schedule but the more I do it the more I'm willing to make it work."



Chris O'Neill

DEALER RELATIONS ASSOCIATE AT AUTOMOTIVEMASTERMIND

*Volunteers for: Economics for Success, World of Choices,
More than Money, A Business of our Own*

ABOUT CHRIS

An organized, results-oriented Customer Service Professional with an excellent track record of significantly increasing service quality, sales and customer base. Outstanding communication, relationship-building and influencing skills; competent in building customer relationships which inspire confidence and loyalty. A highly efficient individual with extensive team leadership experience, able to adapt well to new environments and learn new processes quickly to achieve outstanding results. Strong ability to multi-task and prioritize, and able to organize, train and monitor teams.

WHAT'S A HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR TIME WITH JA?

I have always made it a point to volunteer at my old elementary school; I was lucky enough to not only do this but also be able to present in front of my former Grade 8 teacher, Mr. John Curcio. It was an extremely rewarding experience for me not only did he get to see the man I grew up to be, but to be able to share the experience that I too was in the very classroom that they are in made it more impactful for them, and extremely rewarding for myself as well.



CHRIS AND HIS FORMER
GRADE 8 TEACHER MR. JOHN
CURCIO AT ST. PAUL'S
CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL

HOW HAS VOLUNTEERING WITH JA IMPACTED YOU?

It has made me realize the power JA truly has; it may not be well known as some other organizations, but at every level they do amazing things that opens your eyes to what is possible in our youth. They have also made me a more confident speaker and presenter, which in my current role is pivotal to my success.

WHY DID YOU WANT TO VOLUNTEER WITH JA?

I wanted to make an impact on my community by sharing my experiences to youth who may need guidance in what they need to do to become successful. It is not fault of the school systems that do not teach or mentor students in this way, and I felt that it was my chance to make an impact in their lives so that they can be better prepared for the work world after they have completed their education.

Chris' Advice for Volunteering:

"Show your passion, be energetic, and smile lots! It's not easy to present, let alone present in front of an audience that isn't fully bought in, but as long as you show your true self they will latch on to how excited you are! More importantly, however, HAVE FUN! "



Katie Coughlin

EXECUTIVE LEAD, CORPORATE SERVICES

Volunteers for: Company Program

HI! I'M KATIE...

A CPA, CMA (Chartered Professional Accountant and Certified Management Accountant). During my career, I've worked at in several different positions in several different industries: an auditor at the Canada Revenue Agency (co-op placement); the sports and entertainment industry, both in venue management and food and beverage, where I was a staff accountant, a controller and an area controller. Most recently I've spent the last 3 years working for a non-profit organization that provides support to individuals with developmental, medical and/or complex physical needs. I am an alumnus of both the University of Western Ontario and Fanshawe College



WHY DID YOU WANT TO VOLUNTEER WITH JA?

Traditionally, accounting isn't thought to be an exciting career. I wanted to be able to show the students that there's more to it than just balance sheets and income statements.

WHAT'S A HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR TIME WITH JA?

It's rewarding seeing the members of the team grow and develop. Everyone is a little shy at first when you begin, but then you watch as they develop confidence in their skills and abilities. They begin to step out of their comfort zone and are successful doing so.

HOW HAS VOLUNTEERING WITH JA IMPACTED YOU?

The students are a lot of fun every year. It's refreshing to see the world and current events through their eyes and their perspectives. Plus you can count on them to teach you a thing or two throughout the year (it's how I learned what TikTok was plus several TikTok dances the one year).

Katie's Advice for Volunteering:

"You should definitely do it. It's a few hours of your time a week, but it will make a difference to them and you. "