

Junior Achievement of the Upper Midwest announces \$20M campaign to move headquarters to St. Paul

Campaign will fund creation of a world-class learning facility and help grow the Junior Achievement Foundation of the Upper Midwest

Maplewood, MN — Today, Junior Achievement of the Upper Midwest (JAUM) announced a campaign to move the organization's headquarters from Maplewood to the more centrally located Midway neighborhood in St. Paul. The Let's Build campaign will enable JAUM to double the number of students served by its on-site experiential programs from 17,000 to 34,000. The campaign will also grow the Junior Achievement Foundation of the Upper Midwest, providing the organization with funding to meet new demands for program expansion, operating needs, technology upgrades and the ability to continue providing our programs to local schools at little or no cost.



JAUM has purchased an existing building at 1745 University Ave W. in St. Paul, which will be redesigned and refurbished to meet its specific needs. The building — named the Junior Achievement James R. and Patricia Hemak Experiential Learning Center — will house three premier learning labs: JAUM's existing JA BizTown and JA Finance Park programs and the first-of-its-kind JA Innovation Incubator.

- [JA BizTown](#) is a fully interactive simulated free-market facility where students in grades 4-6 become business leaders, consumers, workers, and citizens for a day.
- [JA Finance Park](#) teaches middle and high school students about personal finance and career exploration through 13 lessons of in-classroom instruction culminating in a day-long simulation.
- JA Innovation Incubator will encourage high school students to cultivate their entrepreneurial interests and develop relationships, talents and skills to build self-confidence. Students will have access to state-of-the-art technology, including a digital business start-up platform, and the opportunity to learn from local entrepreneurs.

“Junior Achievement plays a vital role in the education of Saint Paul students,” said Mayor Coleman. “By bringing relevance to learning, helping to address the opportunity gap, and preparing kids for future success, Junior Achievement’s mission reflects the City of Saint Paul’s commitment to ensuring that all children have the tools they need to be successful both in and out of school. I am honored to welcome Junior Achievement to the City of Saint Paul.”

The campaign is led by a \$4 million gift by retail industry entrepreneur Jim Hemak and his wife Pat, along with more than \$1 million donated by the JAUM Board of Directors.

The campaign has received support from businesses and city leaders in both St. Paul and Minneapolis. Students from throughout the metro area, as well as from Greater Minnesota, will benefit from the programs housed in the new facility. The urban location and proximity to light-rail and bus transportation make the new facility more convenient for students during in-school and after-school programs.

To date, more than \$11 million of the total \$20 million has been raised by private donations. The campaign, now in the public phase, will continue to accept gifts of any amount. Gifts can be made in support of the building or directed to the foundation. There are also limited opportunities for sponsorship of the various shops that comprise the two learning labs (JA BizTown and JA Finance Park).

“As we’ve experienced continued growth in our on-site programs, we needed to find a larger home that was more convenient to schools and students. We were fortunate to find a central location that can accommodate our needs and future growth,” said Gina Blayney, Junior Achievement of the Upper Midwest President & CEO.

Nearly 10,000 volunteers throughout the three-state region, composed primarily of business professionals, teach more than 163,000 students in grades K-12 about how to manage money, equip them with the skills needed to succeed in the workforce, and how to start businesses that strengthen our economy.

In collaboration with the education and business communities, JA programs have been proven to help students make a connection between what they learn in school and how it is applied in the real world – thereby enhancing the relevance of their classroom learning and increasing their understanding of the value of staying in school. Every child who is better prepared for life becomes a stronger contributor to our communities, businesses and economy.

In a recent survey, 84% of JA alumni indicated that JA enabled them to connect what they learned in the classroom to real life, and 67% said that JA made them realize the importance of staying in school.

To learn more about the Let’s Build campaign, or to make a secure online donation, visit letsbuild.jaum.org.

About Junior Achievement of the Upper Midwest

Junior Achievement of the Upper Midwest has been serving students in Minnesota, North Dakota and western Wisconsin since 1949. During the 2016-17 school year we reached more than 163,000 students in grades K-12 with financial literacy, college and career readiness and entrepreneurship education. Our programs are implemented by nearly 10,000 volunteers, mostly business professionals, who share their skills and experience to motivate and inspire students to succeed. Learn more at www.jaum.org.

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