

15,000 and Counting!



Ed Grocholski,
Senior Vice President of Brand

“When the Connect Alumni effort started three years ago, we had about 6,000 alumni in the JA Areas CRMs. Today it’s over 15,000. I think everything you did had a big impact on how JA Areas view alumni.”

Ed’s recognition is much appreciated especially when we look back at the effort and challenges that the JA Pioneers’ Connect Alumni Committee, headed by Shawn O’Hara, had to manage. After assembling a strong committee of JA student alums and JA Pioneer members, the team agreed on a goal of

Committee

- Chip Hardt, Co-Chair (alumnus)
- Shawn O’Hara, Co-Chair (retiree and alumna)
- Frank McIntosh (retiree and alumnus)
- Marty Lee (retiree)
- Eric Blinderman (alumnus)
- Jane Henriques-Doherty (alumna)
- Tom Kushner (alumnus)
- Mike Proctor (retiree and alumnus)
- Laurie Stearn (retiree and alumna)

reconnecting 2,000 JA alums, but a goal is nothing without a strong plan and effective tactics for implementing the plan. This is where the team really excelled.

They began by creating a Guide for Pioneers to effectively reach out to their friends and associates who were involved in JA as students.



Then, they presented their plan and some suggested actions that Area Presidents could use to connect with JA alums in their local area.

These efforts were initially very effective, and the results were encouraging, but then efforts seemed to plateau. It was at this point that the team got very creative. With the help of JA USA, a [Connect Alumni website](#) was created, and high profile alums were enlisted for their endorsement which increased the visibility of the initiative enormously.



Steve
Case, AOL
Founder



Amy Sedaris,
comedian



Donna
Shalala,
U.S.
Secretary of Health
and
Human
Services



Juju Chang,
American
television
journalist
for ABC
News



Mark Cuban,
entrepreneur,
owner of the
Dallas
Mavericks,
and Shark



Shawn O'Hara

Still challenged in reaching their goal of reconnecting 2,000 alums, the team developed a process, based on Delaware's successful efforts, that could easily be implemented by Area Presidents. The Connect Alumni team began coaching and supporting the implementation of the process with many areas that expressed interest.

When Shawn O'Hara reported the committee's achievements at the JASAN annual conference last July, there was a mix of regret and satisfaction in her report. While the team fell short of their goal only reconnecting 1,136 former students and volunteers, they realized that these were great connections and relationships that were re-established, and that they had learned valuable insights from undertaking such an effort. Little did the team realize, however, that the efforts and tools they created were seeds being planted that continued producing results well after the formal effort had ceased. As Ed said, it "*had a big impact on how JA Areas view alumni.*"

Reconnecting alumni with JA never ends, and if you know someone who was in JA as a student or volunteered in one of the programs give them this [link](#).