

Entrepreneurship Workshops Help Youth Own Their Economic Future

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Title: **Entrepreneurship Workshops Help Youth Own Their Economic Future**

Entrepreneurship workshops offered for youth this March and April will give teens early exposure to business, social, and cultural assets available in our community. This series of three Junior Achievement sponsored programs are designed to connect Wheeling area teens with community mentors and entrepreneurship material that inspire and prepare young people for career success.

PLANTS, LLC is organizing the entrepreneurship workshop series in partnership with the Dream Big Music Ed non-profit. Funding for the workshops from Try This West Virginia makes it possible to offer these workshops for teens for free. Junior Achievement of Western PA will provide the content for the workshops and training for community volunteers helping to present the workshop activities. Leaders of three Wheeling-based businesses will share their entrepreneurial success stories at each of the three youth entrepreneurship workshops.

The series of three youth workshops will take place at the Ohio County Public Library on Sundays, March 15 or 22 from 2-4:30 p.m., and Saturday, April 4 from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The local businesses featured at three workshops include the following.

- Session 1, March 15, 2-4:30 p.m., Jonathan Napier, Nail City Record; Web: <http://www.nailcityrecord.com>
- Session 2, March 22, 2-4:30 p.m., Jeanne Finstein, Ed.D., President & Director of Development, Polyhedron Learning Media; Web: <http://www.polyhedronlearning.com>
- Session 3, April 4, 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Hannah Hedrick, Education Director, Grow Ohio Valley Web: <http://www.growov.org>

The workshop agendas are designed to help middle school youth research potential careers, learn how to plan for and keep a job, develop personal branding, and job-hunting skills. Here is

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a brief summary of the six sessions that will be covered (2 sessions per workshop) in the JA My Future series.

1. *My Brand* - students define their own brand and design graphical representations of their future business.
2. *Career Clusters* – students learn about 16 career groups, complete a career interest assessment, and identify jobs within their preferred career areas. In group discussions students share their profiles with others and see the importance of all jobs within a community.
3. *High-Growth Careers* – Students learn about declining and high-growth career outlooks. Students research growth careers in their preferred career clusters.
4. *Career Mapping* – Students learn how early experiences can provide transferable skills for future job success. Students learn about career maps by examining samples and creating their own.
5. *On the Hunt* – Students learn about and practice the process of looking applying and interviewing for a job by playing a game.
6. *Soft skills* – Students learn why both soft and technical skills are essential to keep a job.

What do we hope to accomplish by offering these workshops? We want to introduce entrepreneurship skills in the teens who participate so that when they see a problem or feel frustrated about something, they are open to thinking about how they would solve that problem or at least make the situation better. Encouraging divergent thinking and building up problem solving skills requires a safe environment that welcomes all types of ideas and doesn't frown when ideas fail. The *JA It's My Future* workshops are designed to help teens learn problem-solving skills through encouraging, confidence-building, interactive group activities.

Ed Chess, a Junior Achievement district education director of Southwestern Pennsylvania serving West Virginia will lead the volunteer training for the *JA It's My Future* workshops. As he recalls, "Once I learned about the Junior Achievement mission and commitment to helping young people own their economic future, I became a passionate supporter of Junior

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Achievement. I am committed to help the youth of our communities learn how they can navigate their future economic success.”

The workshop series is free, but students must register by March 10 for the sessions. To register for the Entrepreneurship Workshop Series, Laurie Ruberg at LFRuberg@gmail.com

Community business leaders interested in volunteering to help put on the three entrepreneurship workshops are invited to also contact Laurie Ruberg to participate in a free training session led by Junior Achievement volunteer Ed Chess that will be held at the Wellsburg Library, 945 Main St, Wellsburg, WV 26070 on Wednesday, March 11, from 7 to 7:45 p.m.