****News Release**

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# Junior Achievement Announces Winners of Spring Virtual Stock Market Challenge

***(Buffalo, NY)* –** After proven success with a new virtual event model reaching 589 students this past fall, Junior Achievement of WNY provided an additional Stock Market Challenge learning experience for 595 students this spring. During the week of April 19th, students from 16 WNY high schools participated in a week-long competition of stock market trading to see who would take top prize. Prior to the JA Stock Market Challenge, JA provides their [*JA Take Stock in Your Future*](https://jausa.ja.org/programs/ja-take-stock-in-your-future) curriculum to introduce students to basic concepts about how the market works and the impact of current events. This new curriculum also includes a series of self-guided extension activities for students to engage in deeper learning about the stock market and investing.

**Northwest Bank** is the Presenting Sponsor of this unique JA program. “Northwest has been proud to sponsor the JA Stock Market Challenge for the past three years. We applaud the JA team for their ability to pivot this high energy event to a virtual platform. This just cements their commitment to the youth of WNY. Our team at Northwest would like to applaud this years participants for their hard work, during a very difficult year” says Trina Burruss SVP Community Relations Officer at Northwest Bank.

The competition was held on the How the Market Works website, which allows students to experience the real-life stock market in a simulated environment. Students could choose to compete as individuals or as teams. Participants began with a $25,000 starting portfolio and were encouraged to make transactions throughout the week. Leaderboards were dynamic and were shared daily using the hashtag #JAWNYStockMarketChallenge.

At the close of competition, Junior Achievement (JAWNY) is pleased to recognize Owen Dobrick, from St. Francis High School, as the first- place winner. Owen ended the competition with a $29,436.27 portfolio, a 17.7% return on investment (ROI). Of the experience, Owen said he “gained experience from this challenge while trading under pressure. I think that I will use these skills in the future as I want to be a stockbroker.”

Second place went to Luke Babcock, of Batavia High School. Luke ended the competition with a portfolio of $28, 528.44, a 14.1% ROI. Luke said, “I learned that doing my research will help me create a better plan to be successful. This contest has taught me many valuable things that I will use in the future.”

Third place winner, Joseph Christiano, from first time participating school Grand Island High School, was right behind with a closing portfolio of $27, 925.74, an ROI of 11.7%. Joseph said of his strategy, he “spent two days in the car to visit a college and was on the (stock market) game most of the time and watched some current finance shows on-line and chose stocks that grew 5% from day to day to invest in.”

Rounding out the Top 10 rankings are:

4th place: Ryan Steiner, Hamburg High School

5th place: Jack Keenan, Batavia High School

6th place: Sam Cureo, St. Francis High School

7th place: Cody Lytle, Shawn Morabito, Kelsey Brownell, LeRoy High School

8th place: Zoe Camarata, Jamestown High School

9th place: Aden Benson, Lockport High School

10th place: Tearra Gayhart, Alexander High School

The top four students received an iPad Air donated by HSBC Bank. Student teams placing 5th, 6th and 7th received $50 Visa gift cards, courtesy of West Herr Automotive Group. Teams placing 8th, 9th and 10th received a $50 gift card donated by Tops Markets. Top ten students also won assorted prizes courtesy of Highmark BlueCross BlueShield of WNY.

Altogether, by way of this newly designed event model, JAWNY was able to provide the JA Stock Market Challenge learning experience to 1,184 students, from 28 WNY schools this year. A virtual celebration will also be held for participating students, their teachers and programs sponsors from both the fall and spring events, and will included a special message from former Buffalo Bill, Steve Tasker and others.

*Participating Schools:*

**Erie County**: Alden High School, Amherst Central High School, Cardinal O’Hara High School, City Honors, East Aurora High School, Grand Island High School, Hamburg High School, Holland High School, Maryvale High School, St. Francis High School.

**Niagara County**: Lockport High School, Niagara Falls High School.

**Genesee County**: Alexander High School, Batavia High School, LeRoy High School.

**Chautauqua County**: Jamestown High School.

This program is not possible without support from Sponsors: ***Presenting*** *–* Northwest Bank; Additional support from: The Lenna Foundation; HSBC Bank; Bryant & Stratton College; Tops Friendly Markets; Zgoda and Associates CPAs,; Perry’s Ice Cream; Medaille College*;* Highmark BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York; PwC; Reid Family Foundation. Confer Plastics Inc.; Curbell, Inc.; Deloitte; Evans Bank; KPMG LLP; Lawley; Linde; Lippes Mathias Wexler Friedman LLP; National Fuel; Niagara University; Phillips Lytle LLP; SEFCU; Seneca Foods Foundation; Uniland Development Company; Equitable Advisors; WSF Industries, Inc.; West Herr Automotive Group; Financial Trust Federal Credit Union, Freed Maxick CPAs; Gramkee Financial Consulting, KeyBank N.A.; Lambert & Co.; Lakelet Capital LLC, Monofrax; SendYourKidsToCollege.com, Stahlka Agency; TriMain Development; Wells Fargo Bank N.A.; Vanner Insurance.

Proceeds from the JA Virtual Stock Market Challenge support Junior Achievement’s financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and career & work-readiness pathway programs for kindergarten-12th grade students. For more information about Junior Achievement programs, visit [www.jawny.org](http://www.jawny.org)

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