



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

July 27, 2010

JA OF THE HEARTLAND WINS INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR EXEMPLARY INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

MetLife Foundation and Junior Achievement Celebrate Decade of Innovation through 10th Annual Entrepreneurial Award

Moline, IL – Junior Achievement of the Heartland has won a 2010 MetLife Foundation Entrepreneurial Award and \$25,000 grant for demonstrating outstanding innovation and entrepreneurial spirit through the JA High School Trade Careers Expo. Junior Achievement (JA) and MetLife Foundation have teamed up for the past 10 years to honor the practice of key JA curriculum concepts – entrepreneurship and innovation – at local office levels and to provide funds to expand those efforts.

“MetLife Foundation and JA share a commitment to preparing young people to succeed in the global economy,” said Dennis White, president and CEO of MetLife Foundation. “We are pleased to join JA Worldwide in honoring JA of the Heartland for its exemplary work in putting young people on the path to success.”

“JA of the Heartland has a long history of providing students with experiences that prepare them for life after high school. This award salutes our latest project to connect school curriculum to real life,” said Barbara VenHorst, president, JA of the Heartland.

The JA High School Trade Careers Expo is an interactive student event that introduces area youth to career opportunities in construction and to the educational pathways and training needed for them to become tomorrow’s skilled workforce.

The goal of the student event is to increase awareness of career opportunities available to them in the Quad Cities and provide students with the knowledge and resources they need to make an informed decision about their career plans and how to pursue them.

JA High School Trade Careers Expo was developed in partnership with United Way, Iowa Quad City Chamber of Commerce, Illinois Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce and Tri-City Building Trades. Major sponsors of the event included Alcoa Foundation, The Moline Foundation, Community Foundation of the Great River Bend and Achieve Quad Cities.

The Expo was piloted in 2009 and has become an annual event with more than 700 students attending. JA of the Heartland will host another Expo this fall that focuses on careers in advanced manufacturing at the John T. Blong Technology Center, Eastern Iowa Community Colleges.

Eight JA offices worldwide -- five U.S. and three international offices -- each received a \$25,000 grant from MetLife Foundation for demonstrating the entrepreneurial spirit and delivering innovation in current JA programs.

“The innovation and creativity that JA of the Heartland has demonstrated through JA High School Trade Careers Expo shows that those core JA concepts really do translate to the business world,” said Jack Kosakowski, president chief executive officer of Junior Achievement USA. “The winners of this year’s award have proven the skills taught in JA programs are the same skills required to succeed later in life.”

Two special 10th Anniversary MetLife Foundation Awards with a \$25,000 grant each were presented to two previous recipients whose award-winning initiatives had grown and had the greatest impact in their community and on the organization. All winners were recognized at Junior Achievement USA National Leadership Conference on July 21st in Minneapolis.

The MetLife Foundation Entrepreneurial Award is a significant way to recognize -- and inspire -- innovation across JA through funding those programs exemplifying entrepreneurship. MetLife has been a JA partner since 1972 and also supports JA at the local level through volunteer engagement and board leadership.

Building on its 91-year legacy of empowering young people to own their economic success, Junior Achievement continues to deliver innovation through its rich array of programs in financial literacy, entrepreneurship and work readiness. Learn more about Junior Achievement in your area at www.jaheartland.org.

About MetLife Foundation

MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 by MetLife to carry on its longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. Grants support health, education, civic and cultural programs. The Foundation has supported JA programs since 1979. In addition to sponsoring the Entrepreneurial Award since 2001, the Foundation has provided major funding for development and implementation of JA Exploring Economics™, a program that teaches high school students fundamental economic concepts. For more information about the Foundation, visit www.metlife.org.

About Junior Achievement (JA)

Junior Achievement is the world's largest organization dedicated to inspiring and preparing young people to succeed in a global economy. Through a dedicated volunteer network, Junior Achievement provides in-school and after-school programs for students which focus on three key content areas: work readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy. Today, 126 individual area operations reach more than four million students in the United States, with an additional 5.7 million students served by operations in 122 other countries worldwide. For more information about JA of the Heartland, visit www.jaheartland.org.