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Maria Artuso, Junior Achievement volunteer



Maria Artuso has worked with RBC for 16.5 years, starting as a high school student completing Cooperative education. She moved into a full time role after finishing college and has progressively moved into senior leadership roles thereafter.

Maria has been fortunate to have mentors and support around her and continues to grow both personally and professionally. “I have made wonderful friends, and continue to be challenged, motivated and energized every day by the great people around me!” says Maria.

Over the last 10 years, Maria has proven herself to be an incredible mentor to students through her involvement in Junior Achievement (JA). Maria started volunteering with JA in Barrie and moved to Ottawa in 2012.

Maria has delivered several JA one-day delivery programs, and most recently this year participated as a Business Advisor in the JA Company Program.

Maria will always carry many memories of her JA delivery and recalls being extremely impressed while delivering Diversity in Action in Barrie “I truly believe I stood in front of Canada’s future Prime Minister; this was a young boy in a private school in Barrie; it was truly magical!” she recalls.

Maria truly leaves her mark on students with her high energy and friendly demeanour. She remembers another occasion when a young man was being picked up for a doctor’s appointment, but returned to class afterwards because he wanted to finish the program.

Maria, like many of our ONFE volunteers, believes in community involvement and giving back in a meaningful way. She enjoys supporting and volunteering with post-secondary schools, contributing to the content of their business programs, and supporting future minds. In addition to volunteering, Maria continues to progress her own education and feels that learning is the foundation and backbone to a brighter and greater tomorrow. She says her motivation is driven by a childhood dream of becoming a teacher. “Although I am not a facilitator, there are other ways that I can ensure I am empowering and impacting others with the power of knowledge.” says Maria.

Through her volunteer work, Maria has learned that the collaboration and teamwork within a group outweighs the answer of one individual and brings the entire program to a whole new level of excellence. She feels a sense of accomplishment and sense of pride seeing young students be innovative, creative, and think outside the box.

Maria believes that as a volunteer, it's important to give the students the best experience possible, and that means the best of herself. Maria always shows up to a JA program full over energy and a smile. An important part of JA programs happens when a volunteer can truly connect with the students; Maria does this by sharing her personal experience and inspiration quotes like "If you can dream it, you can do it" from Disney .

For Maria, giving back in a way that is important has amazing rewards with a personal impact. Maria continues to encourage others around her to find volunteer activities that are meaningful to them.

Maria explained "It's easy to underestimate your impact on others; you just never know the lasting impression that you leave on individuals; very valued experience for young individuals."

Maria finds many inspirations and motivations in her life and continues to be a mentor for JA students. She would love to be nominated for Forty under 40 and we would certainly support her in that nomination.

Junior Achievement programs inspire youth to make better financial decisions, start up a business and create a career plan. For more information about volunteering with Junior Achievement, please visit our website www.jaottawa.ca

Written by Jennifer Regnier-Mitchell, Program Manager - Junior Achievement Ottawa