

## Penny Gumley, JA Volunteer



Penny lives a full and fulfilled life, from raising conscientious and open-minded children to volunteering for the JA Ottawa one-day programs to volunteering yearly in Sri Lanka to help rebuild communities and homes devastated by the 2004 tsunami.

Upon graduating from university with a double major in geography and fine arts, Penny wasn't sure what she wanted to pursue but knew that it had to be in something she enjoyed. She began working in a travel and tourism job with a large National company and eventually found her niche in that company with Human Resources. A natural people-person, Penny found her calling in a role that required great people involvement along with being involved with the business and ultimately play a role in driving its success. "Within HR I was most drawn to compensation and data analytics, which is the type of role I have been in for the last 10 years," says Penny.

With two children now in Grade 7, Penny saw there was a lack of knowledge with them in terms of general money management and "as hard as I tried to teach them and advise them, learning from mom is not awesome 😊".

So when Penny heard about JA from a colleague who also volunteers, she knew that it was something she would love to get involved with. Money management "is one of THE most important skills that kids need to have, and it's important to learn it now before it's too late. A solid foundation in money management sets them up for success."

Each time she delivers a JA Gr.7 Dollars With Sense program, Penny believes it validates why she enjoys volunteering so much and why it is so necessary to keep doing so, with JA or any other organization. She truly believes that if the students leave at the end of the day with even just two or three important pieces of information that they can apply in their lives, then it's worth it.

“Making a difference one person at a time is better than making no difference at all,” she states.

One of the fondest memories from her volunteer experiences is when the class play snowballs and the kids learn a funny or interesting fact about one of their fellow students.

Another fond moment is when the ‘lightbulb moment’ hits with the kids. “When you relay real life examples about the power of interest, or fraud, or the cost of planning a class trip... and you see them wide eyed and their mouths agape, you know you have just hit home on that particular topic,” she explains.

Penny certainly practices what she preaches in terms of giving back. She believes that the volunteers get as much out of volunteering as the students



Helping to rebuild a Sri Lankan community with fellow Canadian volunteers.

Penny is second from left.

do, and that they leave at the end of the day with the knowledge that they have opened a lot of eyes on the topic of money management, and how important that will become.

Personally, Penny is ensuring that her and her family are discovering new countries, new experiences, and new cultures on at least one trip per year. She firmly

believes that this provides perspective, and an appreciation of what we have in Canada.

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

[www.jaottawa.ca](http://www.jaottawa.ca)

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