

## JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT JEUNES ENTREPRISES

**Steven Jones and Justin Minnes, Business Advisors  
with JA Company at John McCrae Secondary School**



Steven Jones, owner at Perception Marketing, and Justin Minnes, Consultant with Investors Group and previous owner at Cyclelogik, are no strangers to the roller coaster that is entrepreneurship.

“In a time when our education system does not teach basic business and entrepreneurship, I wanted to be part of a program that fosters innovation in youth,” said Steven.

As Justin was in the midst of building a program that introduced youth to financial literacy he was introduced to Junior Achievement and knew that it was the right fit.

Steven and Justin have both participated in the revival of the JA Company program. They have worked with a group of students from John McCrae Secondary School as they build a business of their own.

“The most fun we’ve had as a group has been during the free flow of ideas” says Steven as he describes the group’s brainstorming session to come up with #hashtags for their custom t-shirts. “It was really amazing to see the group use creativity and they really bonded as a group during those moments.”

Both Justin and Steven also volunteer with other JA programs such as Business Basics, Dollars with Sense and Economics for Success. These programs are delivered over the course of one school day with elementary school students. “The feedback at the end of the day is always the best part;” says Justin “it is great to have students approach me at the end of the day and say thank you.”



The impact of volunteering with the JA Company programs is seen in a different way. “We are seeing the students change as they push through challenges, they are forced to think in different ways and work through adversity” explained Steven. Justin states that they have seen the student’s confidence level increase along with their problem solving skills and financial knowledge.

Justin and Steven both agree that through this experience they have learned a lot about working with adolescents. Their role as Business Advisors is to guide and mentor the youth through the birth of their company. This is not always an easy task. “We’ve had to allow them to make mistakes and learn” says Steven.



So would you volunteer again and what would you say to someone who might be considering it? “Absolutely!” says Justin. “During a time when there is less focus being put on extra-curricular activities and limited curriculum focus on financial literacy and business, it’s important to participate, and rewarding for both advisors and participants.”

With having put in over 100 hours towards JA Company, Steven and Justin continue to mentor students with their light heartedness, humour and down to earth approach. They are looking forward to the program wrap up, and a well-deserved break before starting up with another group of students in the Fall.

When asked about their favourite type of ice cream, Justin said “PC Candy Cane Chocolate chip because it only comes out during the holidays which means you can’t get tired of it.” Then Steven laughed “that’s probably why my favourite ice cream is rocky road - it’s like the Company program, a little bit of everything and it’s awesome.”

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

April 2014 | Written by Jennifer Regnier-Mitchell, Program Manager - Junior Achievement Ottawa