

‘Every time I teach, I learn’: JA Volunteer Spotlight on Missy Parrish

Junior Achievement of Central Indiana volunteer Missy Parrish is a young professional balancing her full-time job, family and a passion for teaching people of all ages. For our March Volunteer Spotlight, we caught up with her to hear more about her experiences with JA and the value she sees in taking time to unplug from the technology-driven society to connect to the community – something she hopes other professionals will strive to do, as well.

Tell us a little about yourself and your current employment.

I have been in training and development my entire career. I started training while still in college, but never imagined it would turn into a career. Through the years, I have trained adult learners on many aspects of business, including soft skills, selling principles and software applications. Currently, I train sales representatives for Interactive Intelligence; I have been with the company for more than two years and love it!

What’s your background with Junior Achievement of Central Indiana and what’s your role with us now as a volunteer?

I have been volunteering with JA for two years. In that time, I have been a part of JA’s Giving Tuesday, as well as being in the classroom setting. Each semester, I am assigned a grade and teacher at a school in the Indianapolis area. I volunteer once a week for five weeks straight and deliver the set JA curriculum for that grade.

What drew you to JA when deciding where you wanted to volunteer? What keeps you motivated?

One of the best things about working at Interactive Intelligence is how committed the company is to the community. Human Resources had sent an email asking for volunteers with JA, and since I love teaching, I thought this would be a great opportunity for personal growth. I had told my husband for some time that I felt like I needed something for me – not a work-related activity, not for our children – something that was just mine. JA seemed like a great chance at filling that need.

The kids keep me motivated. I love how excited they get to learn, and I love even more when I can see them remember the information and start to apply it in the various activities. There is a much different level of excitement when teaching young kids versus training adults.

Have you learned anything from your experience that you didn’t expect to learn? What have been some unexpected outcomes or lessons from your experience, if any?

Every time I teach, I learn. The best thing I have learned from this experience is how to be a better mom.

As a young professional, why do you think it’s important to stay involved in the community through volunteering?

In a world where we are connected 24 hours a day, seven days a week to technology, I think it’s more important than ever to unplug and do something good. If you keep looking solely at your

iPhone, you're going to miss the world around you – the good and the bad. Volunteering is our chance to help make things better and keep finding the good.

Do you feel that young professionals specifically can bring any unique insights or connections to JA as a volunteer, and if so, what are they?

Oh, of course they can! The topics are typically focused on the community – family, money, etc. These are things that all grown-ups can discuss. Even though JA does a fantastic job of providing a structured curriculum, it is more the excitement and focus you put on the curriculum that makes JA successful. As a young professional, why not take the time to help shape the future?

What advice would you give to other young professionals considering getting involved?

It does not take a lot of time out of your week, and the prep time is minimal. Even when you might not feel like going to teach that day, once you are finished with your lesson you are always glad you went. I think anyone that tries volunteering with JA will be hooked. And if you do not believe me, then try and see for yourself!

Are you a young professional interested in volunteering or learning more about Junior Achievement of Central Indiana? For more information, visit <https://www.juniorachievement.org/web/ja-indy/volunteer>.