



# JA BIZTOWN® ELKHART COUNTY: WHERE IT ALL COMES TOGETHER

A CAMPAIGN TO BRING HANDS-ON EDUCATION  
IN WORK READINESS, FINANCIAL LITERACY AND  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP TO OUR REGION.



# JA BIZTOWN ELKHART COUNTY: WHERE IT ALL COMES TOGETHER

CREATING A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE REQUIRES A  
READY WORKFORCE AND PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITY.

If you could improve one thing about the South Bend – Elkhart Region, what would it be?

For us it would be **to develop a better skilled workforce** and **create more opportunities for our kids** to work here and live comfortable lives.

That is why we're leading the campaign to bring JA BizTown to Elkhart County. This new facility will build on current Junior Achievement programming by bringing hands-on education closer to home. Today, students have to travel to Fort Wayne for JA BizTown's capstone project; the new facility will make participation an option for thousands more kids every year.

Why is this important? Because JA BizTown shows kids how the world works outside of their schools and families. It opens their eyes to the businesses and careers around them. And it gives them a glimpse of what it takes to succeed in life.

This is truly where it all comes together – for our kids, our businesses and our community. Won't you join us?



**Amish Shah**  
Honorary Campaign Chair



**Adam Bujalski**  
Campaign Co-Chair



**Steve Brown**  
Campaign Co-Chair



*“The JA BizTown project will be important to strengthening partnerships and aligning education efforts across the South Bend – Elkhart Region. Additionally, it will assure the opportunity for students to excel by enhancing their own skills and becoming aware of career pathways that also help the region thrive by bringing skills and ideas to the marketplace.”*

REGINA EMBERTON  
PRESIDENT AND CEO  
SOUTH BEND – ELKHART REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

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## EDUCATION AND TRAINING ARE THE KEYS TO CREATING A GREAT FUTURE FOR OUR REGION.

We know that Elkhart and its surrounding counties have a strong tradition of business and entrepreneurship. We're proud of the companies established here and rely on the jobs they provide to support our families.

We also recognize the connection between these opportunities and a skilled local workforce.

Businesses need a steady supply of capable employees and residents need a steady supply of dependable jobs.

Education and training are necessary to bridging the gap, starting with our youngest residents. Students need to understand the career paths available to them and what it takes to succeed. They need to develop critical thinking skills and make informed decisions about their futures.

The future of local economic development relies on our ability to cultivate and nurture the values of innovation. We need to feed students' interests, inspiring and preparing them to stay and build lives here.

And JA can help.

## TODAY IN OUR REGION: A NEED FOR SKILLS



The post-secondary completion rate in our region (25%) far lags the state (33%) and national average (38%).



Many of those who do graduate leave: 48% of high school and college graduates in Northeast Indiana are no longer in the region five years after graduation. (Northeast Indiana Works, 2019)



The effects of this cycle can be seen in other numbers: About 55% of students in our region qualify for free or reduced school meals. The number of people living in poverty is 17% and trending up.

## JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT CAN HELP

Junior Achievement USA (JA) is the nation's largest organization dedicated to giving young people the knowledge and skills they need to own their economic success, plan for their futures and make smart academic and economic choices.

JA's programs – in the core content areas of work readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy – ignite the spark in young people to experience the opportunities of work and life in the 21st century.

**8 out of 10 students say JA helped them see the importance of staying in school.**

**76% of teachers and volunteers report that JA better prepares students for the world of work.**



## JA IN OUR REGION

Annually, the suite of JA programs along with Lemonade Day serve more than 18,000 students in grades pre-k to 12 in Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties as part of JA Northern Indiana (JANI).

This includes more than 1,000 students in grades 4-6 who participate in **JA BizTown** programming. Many of these students travel to the JA BizTown facility in Fort Wayne for their capstone project.

## BUILDING THE FOUNDATION: JA BIZTOWN

JA BizTown operates as a partnership between local business leaders and educators to provide supplementary education around necessary life skills at no cost to families.

The program includes 13 in-class lessons which culminate with a capstone project: a day-long visit to a simulated town with storefronts that represent actual employers in the community. During this exciting visit, students experience life as a worker and a consumer. They operate banks, manage restaurants, write checks and vote for mayor. The program exposes them to a working economy and helps connect the dots between what they learn in school and the real world.

Nowhere else can kids this age get this kind of hands-on experience – to teach and inspire them for a lifetime.



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*“Our time with JA BizTown allowed the students to connect our state standards for economics to a real-life experience. This was both engaging and educational for everyone involved. JA BizTown provided students with solid foundational skills through the daily lessons and activities. These were then strengthened while the students participated in the on-site simulation. This program allowed the teachers to reach all students learning styles in an effective and supportive environment.”*

RYAN SMAKA  
TEACHER, CONCORD INTERMEDIATE  
CONCORD COMMUNITY SCHOOLS





## JA BIZTOWN'S BIG LIFE LESSONS

- The steps needed to apply for and obtain a job, and the critical-thinking, problem-solving, teamwork and leadership skills needed to succeed in that job.
- How to write checks, use a debit card and manage money effectively.
- How goods, services and resources flow in an economy.
- How to start, finance and manage a business that will bring jobs to a community.
- The rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

## JA BIZTOWN'S IMPACTS

Junior Achievement programs like JA BizTown are proven to create life-long positive habits that help break the cycle of poverty. According to a spring 2019 evaluation:



**100%** of students interviewed that participated in JA BizTown said they were confident in their ability to be successful future employees.



**87%** of students said they had a greater appreciation/ understanding of their future career opportunities.



**85%** said they found value in the free enterprise system.



**64%** said they considered entrepreneurship as a career option.

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*“At HEA we believe that hands-on experiential education is the best way to learn. We’re excited for a JA BizTown facility to come to Elkhart County so that local 4th-6th grade students can build the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in their careers and in life.”*

BRIAN WIEBE  
PRESIDENT AND CEO  
HORIZON EDUCATION ALLIANCE





## THE CHALLENGE TO CURRENT JA BizTOWN PARTICIPATION: LOGISTICS AND COST

While more than 1,000 local students currently participate in JA BizTown programming, they must be transported to and from Fort Wayne to complete the JA BizTown curriculum. This journey can be over two hours each way and has prevented schools from participating in the capstone day or overall program.

As a matter of fact, 90% of teachers surveyed said that travel time and transportation costs are critical issues affecting their schools' ability to take part.

Additionally, many local districts are facing a shortage of bus drivers, making it difficult to pull buses from their regular routes for travel to Fort Wayne.

## THE SOLUTION: BUILD A REGIONAL JA BizTOWN FACILITY

Our region needs a space where local youth are empowered to discover their potential and turn their ideas of today into the businesses of tomorrow. That is why JA and local business leaders are undertaking a project to build a JA BizTown facility at the ETHOS Innovation Center in Elkhart.

Additional funds will be raised to sustain programs into the future.

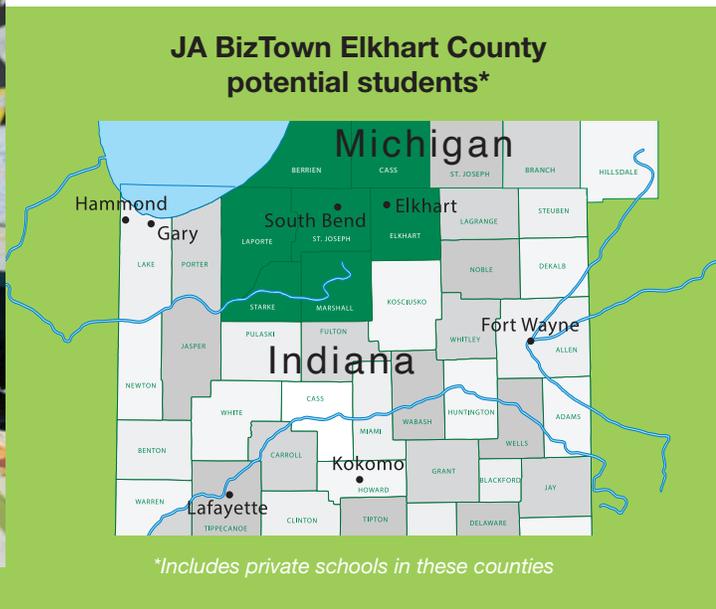


# JA BizTOWN ELKHART COUNTY: WHERE IT ALL COMES TOGETHER

A CAMPAIGN TO BRING HANDS-ON EDUCATION  
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### CAMPAIGN BUDGET

Build out and one-time expenses	\$1,400,000
Long-term fund	\$1,600,000
General sustainability Y1-Y3	\$500,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,500,000</b>



**1. Make critical lessons accessible to more kids.**



Junior Achievement programs like JA BizTown are proven to create life-long positive habits that help break the cycle of poverty.

As one of only 30 JA BizTowns in the nation, this facility will improve access to important programming for thousands of kids who currently cannot participate due to logistics and cost.

It is estimated that the new facility has the potential to serve almost 10,000 students from diverse backgrounds in grades 4-6 within the first four years of operation.

**2. Create a dynamic regional community center for extraordinary youth education.**



The purpose of building JA BizTown at the ETHOS Innovation Center is to capitalize on awareness and operational efficiencies for the benefit of both organizations. The ETHOS facility is well-located, accessible and offers the right kind of space for JA BizTown programming. This partnership will position our region with an efficient, accessible educational hub to maximize students’ experience both in and out of the classroom.

**3. Foster quality of place and a collaborative regional spirit.**



The South Bend – Elkhart Region is tightly linked through the regional economy. The invisible boundaries that used to exist have been replaced by a new, collaborative spirit. Additionally, employers and employees are looking at us as one community.

As we move forward, efforts like a local JA BizTown will be essential to building on recent economic progress to enhance the local “quality of place” and maximize the level of programming available to all families in the region.

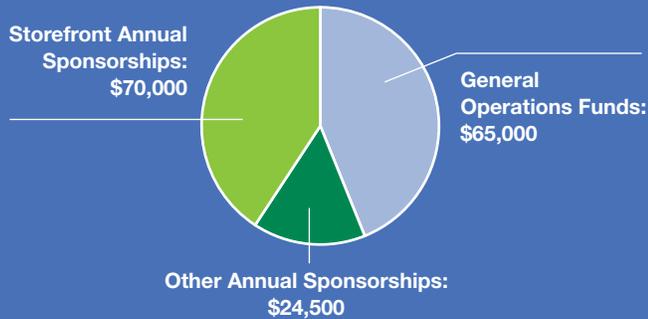
The JA BizTown facility will bring local businesses together to showcase the innovative spirit of our region and inspire the next generation of leaders to keep building for the future.



A REGIONAL JA BIZTOWN FACILITY

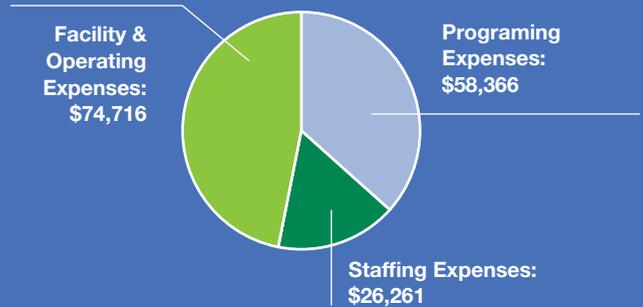
# JA BIZTOWN PROJECTED ANNUAL REVENUE AND EXPENSE/BUDGET

REVENUE: TOTAL \$159,500\*



\*Revenue reflects first three years.

EXPENSES: TOTAL \$159,343\*



\*Expenses reflect first year.

100% of JANI participating teachers said their colleagues would be more likely to participate in the program if there was a regional JA BizTown facility.

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“As a city where things are invented and made, Elkhart is the perfect place to have such a learning center. The hands-on nature of JA curriculum and the JA BizTown experience provide opportunities to learn from experts and adults in the community. A local entrepreneurship and financial literacy center is the obvious evolution for this valuable program.”

DR. STEVE THALHEIMER  
SUPERINTENDENT  
ELKHART COMMUNITY SCHOOLS





## YOU CAN HELP CREATE A GREAT FUTURE FOR OUR REGION.

Education and training are key to our region's future, and the foundation for success is built through educational initiatives like JA BizTown. Through JA BizTown activities, students visualize their futures, discover their passions and begin to understand how they can become leaders in their own communities.

**NOWHERE ELSE CAN KIDS IN GRADES 4-6 GET THIS KIND OF HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE – TO TEACH AND INSPIRE THEM FOR A LIFETIME.**

**Join us in bringing JA BizTown to our community.** Your gift will help provide work readiness, financial literacy and entrepreneurship education to more local kids.

## HOW TO GIVE

🌐 **Online at**  
[jalemonade.org/donate](http://jalemonade.org/donate)

✉ **Mail a check** made out to  
JA BizTOWN ELKHART  
COUNTY: WHERE IT ALL  
COMES TOGETHER to:

Junior Achievement  
Elkhart County  
c/o Kem Krest  
3221 Magnum Drive  
Elkhart, IN 46516

👤 **Contact us for more  
information:**

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*“ETHOS Innovation Center is extremely excited to welcome Junior Achievement's BizTown to our campus. Junior Achievement is a well-established brand and has already significantly impacted our county. Similar to ETHOS, the JA entrepreneurial spirit and experiential learning moves the ideas of children into future innovations and community progress. The founding of BizTown in Elkhart County will further serve to enhance educational opportunities for our students locally and regionally. ETHOS believes that combining the educational objectives of STEM and BizTown will result in an unmatched and unique opportunity for our community.”*

JOHN B. TAYLOR  
CEO  
ETHOS INNOVATION CENTER

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*“Elkhart is a community of entrepreneurship, and what we really want to do is make sure that we continue to give these kids the tools and the resources they need. This project will do just that. Join me in creating an innovative, collaborative and inspired future by supporting JA BizTown in our region.”*

AMISH SHAH  
CEO  
KEM KREST

