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This article was submitted by Joyce Richards, president of Junior Achievement of Arizona Inc. Junior Achievement of Arizona Inc., a volunteer-driven organization focused on preparing young people to succeed in a global economy, is launching its new elementary-school capstone program, JA BizTown.

Last year, more than 11,500 students in statewide schools participated in what is now JA BizTown. Overall, there were more than 72,000 students at 247 schools participating in various Junior Achievement programs. advertisement JA BizTown encompasses work readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy, providing students in Grades 4-6 with a solid foundation of business-economics and free-enterprise education. Throughout the program, students are encouraged to use critical-thinking skills to learn about key economic concepts as they explore and enhance their understanding of free enterprise.

Through daily lessons, hands-on activities and active participation in a simulated community, students develop a strong understanding of the relationship between what they learn in school and their successful participation in a local economy. JA BizTown helps prepare students for a lifetime of learning and academic achievement. 'Walking around JA BizTown writing checks, applying for bank loans and assuming the role of a CEO, CFO or radio-station disc jockey may feel like fun and games for the students,' said Joyce Richards, president of Junior Achievement of Arizona. 'But the fact is, JA BizTown puts the game of life into serious context for kids by helping them connect the dots between what they learn in school and how financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship - the economics of life - play out in the real world.' Junior Achievement of Arizona provides in-school and after-school programs for more than 70,000 students in grades K-12. Junior Achievement offers educational programs that focus on business, citizenship, economics, entrepreneurship, ethics/character, financial literacy and career development.

Worldwide, there are more than 3.5 million students served by Junior Achievement operations in 100 countries.