

# Our Region<sup>®</sup>

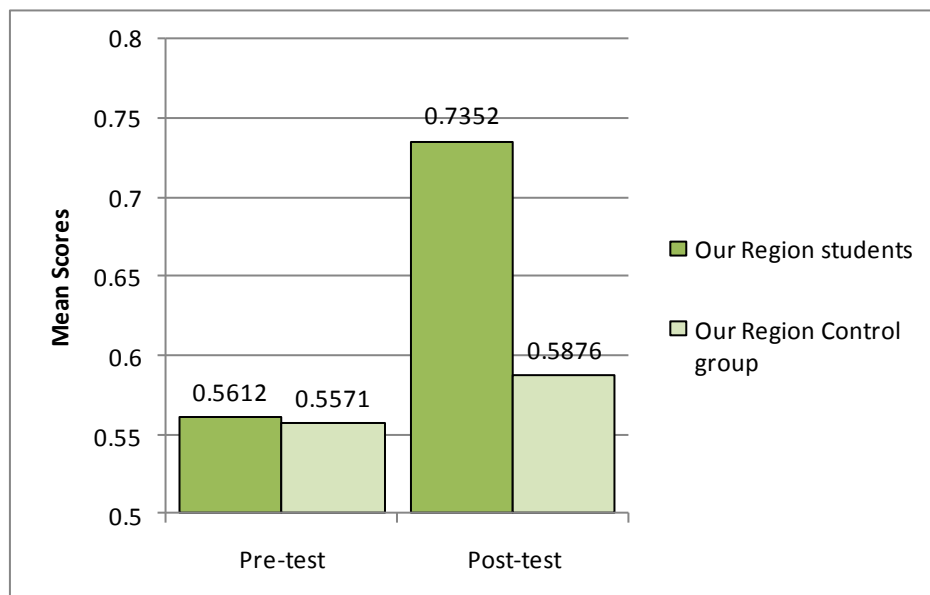
## Overview

- In spring 2010, JA USA conducted a program evaluation of the elementary school program, *Our Region*. The program, , geared for fourth grade, helps students understand natural, human, and capital resources and how resources are combined to create goods and services that individuals, businesses, and organizations provide to consumers.
- The evaluation was designed to measure the impact of this program on students' knowledge, skill development, and attitudes towards school. The report that follows summarizes the data obtained from students, teachers, and volunteers between January and July 2010.

## Sample

- A total of 321 *Our Region* students from six different states participated in the evaluation.
- The evaluation included pre-/post-matched pairs from participating (194) and control students (127) along with 15 teacher/volunteer surveys.
- As evidenced by the table below, JA students know significantly more about the concepts of business, personal finance, and entrepreneurship than their non-participating peers. The average score increase from pre- to post-test, per evaluation site, for students participating in the *Our Region* program was 17.6%.

## Student Knowledge Gain



\*Effect size was calculated for the difference in means on the post-test between the JA and non-JA groups producing an effect size of .73 for the *Our Region* program. The *Our Region* post-test means are statistically significant at a confidence level of 100.  $p < .000$ ,  $T = 6.4565$ .

- In addition to knowledge gain, the evaluation assessed the impact of the program on key youth development outcomes. The *Our Region* program had a significant impact on two of the youth development outcomes assessed: communication skills and goal-setting. JA students improved in each of these areas and had a higher level compared to their non-JA peers.

## Attitudinal Impact

- At least seven out of 10 students reported that Junior Achievement “helped me to understand how to manage my money,” “helped me prepare for the future,” and “made me aware of career options.”
- More than six out of ten students participating in *Our Region* program reported that “Junior Achievement made me realize the importance of staying in school.”
- The overwhelming majority of students (87%) reported that they “liked JA very much” or “liked it somewhat.”

## Adult Survey Results

- The majority of adult respondents (teachers, volunteers, and JA staff) agreed or strongly agreed that activity concepts were age appropriate (98%) and stimulated student participation (94%).
- Adult respondents agreed or strongly agreed that students’ improved on a series of skills indicative of future academic and work success—teamwork, decision-making, critical thinking, interpersonal communication, and the ability to analyze financial information.
- The skills that teachers and volunteers identified as the areas with the biggest improvement were critical thinking (80% agree/strongly agree) and the ability to analyze financial information (73% agree/strongly agree).
- The majority of adult respondents reported that the *Our Region* program connected what is learned in the classroom with real life (100% agree/strongly agree) and JA helped students’ realize the importance of staying in school (95% agree/strongly agree).
- To assess program satisfaction, adult respondents were asked if they would recommend the JA program experience to colleagues or friends. Across the board, 100% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed with this statement.

*I learned that businesses depend on each other.* – Student

*I learned that entrepreneurs are people that start their own business.* – Student

*I learned about the 3 resources, human, capital, natural.* – Student

*This is a foundational piece on which I can build future instruction on economics and business.* – Teacher



*Being a JA volunteer gives me a great feeling in helping children learn something new, and know that I am providing them with a positive experience that will contribute to their future learning. I also feel that individuals who volunteer for JA serve as positive role models for students by demonstrating that they too can one day become teachers and/or volunteers.*

– Volunteer