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Junior Achievement of Southwest Florida Awarded \$55,000 Grant from Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation for Pre-Apprenticeship Program

Funding will support hands-on training and career preparation for 40 Lee County high school seniors

FORT MYERS, FL. – October 12, 2026– Junior Achievement of Southwest Florida has been awarded a \$55,000 grant from the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation through its Fall 2026 grant cycle to support the JA SWFL Pre-Apprenticeship Program for Lee County high school seniors.

The award continues the foundation’s longstanding partnership with Junior Achievement of Southwest Florida. During the grant period, September 16, 2026, through September 15, 2027, the program plans to enroll 40 students.

“The Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation’s continued investment helps students build a path from high school to a career in the skilled trades,” said Cheryl Kunkle, President and CEO of Junior Achievement of Southwest Florida. “Through hands-on training, industry credentials and connections with local employers, our Pre-Apprenticeship Program helps students prepare for work and understand their options after graduation.”

Participants will receive safety instruction, workplace preparation, technical skill-building and employer engagement. Training includes opportunities to earn job-relevant certifications or credentials, such as OSHA 10, First Aid/CPR/AED, or forklift training, as applicable, along with interview practice and exposure to skilled-trades careers.

Through partnerships with schools, business volunteers, and employers, the program helps students prepare for employment, continued technical training, or apprenticeship pathways. The foundation’s support strengthens these opportunities while helping local employers connect with young people preparing to enter the skilled trades.

For more information about Junior Achievement of Southwest Florida and its programs, visit www.JASWFL.org.

About the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation

The Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation was created in 2004 by Best Buy founder, Dick Schulze, to give back to the communities where Dick and his family grew up, in Minnesota, where he built Best Buy to become the world's largest consumer electronics retailer, and in Florida, where he now maintains a permanent residence. The Schulze Family Foundation creates grant partnerships with organizations that generate meaningful results in human and social services, education, and health and medicine. In all its activities, the Foundation embraces its founder's vision to strengthen and support initiatives that lead to change within our communities. For more information, please visit www.SchulzeFamilyFoundation.org.

About Junior Achievement

Junior Achievement (JA) is the world's largest organization dedicated to preparing young people to own their economic success, plan for their future, and make informed academic and financial decisions. JA programs are delivered by business and community volunteers and provide hands-on experiences that teach students from kindergarten through high school critical skills in financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship. JA is also expanding its reach to pre-K learners and young adults ages 18 to 25 to ensure children gain a strong foundation and emerging adults are equipped for independent success.

Today, JA reaches more than 4.4 million students annually in 102 U.S. markets, contributing to a global network that serves 12.5 million students in over 100 countries. Junior Achievement USA is a member of JA Worldwide. For more information, visit www.ja.org.

Locally, during the 2025–2026 school year, Junior Achievement of Southwest Florida partnered with hundreds of classroom volunteers to deliver 131,347 hours of instruction to 16,995 students across Collier, Lee, and Charlotte counties. To learn more, visit www.JASWFL.org, call (239) 225-2590, or email info@jaswfl.org.

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