JA Centennial
Junior Achievement turns 100 in 2019

Junior Achievement will be celebrating its centennial throughout 2019. Originally called the Boys’ and Girls’ Bureau of the Eastern States League, JA was started in 1919 in Springfield, Massachusetts by AT&T Chairman Theodore Vail, Strathmore Paper Company Founder Horace Moses and Massachusetts Senator Murray Crane.

The organization was founded in response to families moving from farms to the growing industrial cities. The goal was to provide young people with the skills they would need to be successful adults in their new communities and consisted of the JA Company Program, an after-school program that teaches teens about starting a company with the help of business advisors from the local community.

Here are few more highlights from JA’s history:

- Junior Achievement was recognized by U.S. President Calvin Coolidge for its efforts to help young people who relocated from farms to the city adapt to the booming industrial economy.
- During World War II, JA student companies supported the war effort through recycling drives and by supplying the armed forces with items such as clothes hangers. Following World War II, Junior Achievement began to expand nationally in earnest.
- The first international JA office opened in Canada in the 1950s.
- In 1969, Junior Achievement marked its 50th Anniversary by delivering programs in all 50 U.S. States.
- During its peak in the early 1970s, the JA Company Program reached nearly 300,000 teens a year.
- By 1987 Junior Achievement, combining both after-school and in-school programs, was reaching 1 million students a year.
- Today, Junior Achievement reaches nearly 5 million students a year in the United States with the support of nearly a quarter-million volunteers in over 100 communities. Globally, JA reaches 10 million students in more than 100 countries.
- JA is pushing the education envelope with the implementation of blended-learning, augmented reality and project-based programs.

To help mark the JA Centennial, there are several national events planned in 2019. These include Junior Achievement representatives ringing the bell at the New York Stock Exchange and the release of an hour long PBS documentary.

JA of Utah will also be celebrating the centennial in special events throughout the year including our Centennial Birthday Bash Bowl-A-Thon and special recognition of Spencer F. Eccles for his dedication to the success of Utah’s students, so keep an eye out for all that will be happening!