



FOR RELEASE
September 25, 2015
Contact: Kristi Zimsky
619.906.4926
kzimsky@jasandiego.org
@JASanDiego

Junior Achievement of San Diego County Announces the Grand Opening of Mission Fed JA Finance Park

Officially Opening Its Doors Thursday, October 1, the Park will teach Thousands of High School Students and Families How to Plan for Career and Financial Success

SAN DIEGO, CA – Sept. xx, 2015-- Junior Achievement of San Diego County (JA) announces the Grand Opening for the nonprofit's newest education center, Mission Fed JA Finance Park. The event will be Thursday, October 1st from 5.30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Capdevilla Gillespie Center for Junior Achievement, located at 4756 Mission Gorge Place, San Diego, 92120. Mission Federal Credit Union provided \$1 million in funding to name the new financial literacy center.

Built by the innovative team of Balfour Beatty Construction and designed by the creative architect firm of Gensler, the 6,300 square foot, high-tech facility takes "reality-based" learning to a new level by placing students in authentic, real-world scenarios, where they take control of their financial decisions. The JA Finance Park experience allows students to imagine who they want to be, while providing hands-on tools to plan for their future and reach their full career potential.

"San Diego's success lies in the cultivation of our young people. To ensure our growth and competitiveness we need to cultivate the next generation of professionals right here on our home turf, which is why we are thrilled to bring Finance Park to the San Diego community," said Joanne Pastula, President and CEO at Junior Achievement of San Diego County. "We are so thankful for our friends at Mission Federal Credit Union, who share JA's passion for inspiring youth to dream for a bigger and brighter future."

"One of the ways Mission Fed gives back to the community is through our commitment to financial education," said Angie Lasagna, Vice President of Community Relations for Mission Fed. "High schools are not readily able to offer the types of economics courses that help students learn to budget their money. That is where Mission Fed JA Finance Park can play a key role. We want to do our part to help high school students gain the skills they'll need to manage their money and reach their goals as confident, successful members of the community."

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The Mission Fed JA Finance Park Experience

Our high school students are more tech savvy than ever. This is why when students first enter the Park, they will not find paper or pencils. Instead, students go through the simulation using Samsung tablets and mobile app technology. Incorporating technology into student learning is important because the Park appeals to a generation that relies heavily on technology to navigate everyday needs.

Students then receive a “life situation” and income based upon a real San Diego job they chose in the classroom. The students are then challenged to research and make the best choices for their “families” based on corresponding “salaries.” This “life situation” activity starts by visiting 14 shops and five freestanding kiosks, where students have to buy a car, shop for groceries, purchase a home, make investments and donate to charity.

During their experience, they face real-life situations and financial problems:

- What kind of house can I afford?
- Do I buy a pricey new sports car or a practical vehicle that works for my family’s needs?
- How important is my credit rating?

Vivikah Cuevas, a 16-year old student at Clairemont High recently had the opportunity to put her money management skills to the test during a school field trip to the Park. “Wow,” expressed Cuevas. “I had no idea San Diego is so expensive. I quickly realized getting an apartment on my own, at the age of 18, is not going to happen unless I start saving lots of money now or have lots of roommates.”

At the end of the day, students, along with the assistance of community volunteers, must have a balanced budget. They also have the opportunity to visit our on-site career center to explore real-life job opportunities in San Diego.

Finance Park is not only for high school students. JA for Everyone is where families and individuals— of all ages and backgrounds—can participate in the simulation of Mission Fed JA Finance Park and learn how to budget and plan and/or enhance their career.

“We welcome adults and families who want to learn from the mistakes they’ve made or avoid them all together,” explained JA Finance Park Campaign Manager Martha Phillips.

More than 40 leading San Diego companies have already joined forces to open Mission Fed JA Finance Park. The shops are sponsored by the following businesses: YMCA of San Diego, San Diego County Ford Dealers, Mission Federal Credit Union and United Way of San Diego County are lead sponsors; Qualcomm, the San Diego International Airport, the Farrell Family Foundation and Laurie and Carlee McGrath are also sponsoring key learning centers inside and outside the Park.

“Thank you Gensler for dreaming it, Balfour Beatty Construction for building it and Mission Fed for naming it and TekWorks for bringing it to life,” said Mission Fed JA Finance Park Campaign Manager Martha Phillips. “JA Finance Park has been in our plans since we opened McGrath Family JA BizTown in 2006 and we are so thankful to all of our supporters who have personally given, along with the corporate and family foundations, for making Mission Fed JA Finance Park a reality.”

To find out more on how you and your company can get involved *today* to build a financially strong future for tomorrow visit: jasandiego.org

Watch a video about the new *JA Finance Park* program: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2J3rdSPDVI>
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About Mission Fed JA Finance Park:

Mission Fed JA Finance Park

The state-of-the-art Mission Fed JA Finance Park will bring together teachers, students, families and businesses to serve as the missing link between the classroom and the real world of adult responsibilities. The Park will help students imagine who they want to be, while providing hands-on tools to plan for their future and reach their full career potential. When students come to the Park, they receive a “life situation” and income based upon a real San Diego job they choose in the classroom. Students then have to buy a home, purchase a car, shop for groceries, make investments and save for the future. At the end of the day, students have to meet a monthly budget. They will also have the opportunity to visit our on-site career center to explore real-life job opportunities in San Diego. For additional information, please visit www.jasandiego.org.

About Mission Federal Credit Union:

Mission Federal Credit Union is a not-for-profit organization providing a wide variety of financial services to meet the needs of its customers. With more than \$2.8 billion in assets, over 25 local branches, and more than 180,000 customers, Mission Fed is the largest, locally based credit union exclusively serving San Diego County. Mission Fed enhances the lives of its customers through financial education and financial services. In addition, Mission Fed contributes to hundreds of non-profit educational and community organizations. At Mission Fed, your success is our bottom line. All San Diegans are welcome. Federally insured by NCUA. To learn more, visit www.MissionFed.com.

About Junior Achievement of San Diego County:

For 65 years, JA of San Diego has been in the business of preparing our young people for lifetime successes. Our mission is to prepare young people for the real world by showing them how to get a job, start a business and how money works. Last year, JA provided life-changing programs to 55,000 students in K-12 classrooms and in the McGrath Family JA Biztown. The nonprofit’s goal is to reach nearly 70,000 in the 2015-2016 school year with the launch of Mission Fed JA Finance Park, a reality-based learning program that inspires high school students, families and community partners to plan for their future and embrace financial responsibility. Thanks to the support of over 5,200 dedicated volunteers, JA is able to serve 36 school districts throughout San Diego County. The nonprofit has 22 employees, 48 members who serve as JA’s Board of Directors and an operating budget of \$3 million. For the latest news and information, we invite you visit: jasandiego.org