

Junior Achievement Teams Up With Spirit of Freedom Foundation to Display Constitutional Plaques

Junior Achievement of South Florida has teamed up with the Spirit of Freedom Foundation to develop a remarkable new initiative aimed at educating and inspiring American students about the cornerstone of their rights and freedoms. The central element of this initiative is a beautiful array of constitutional plaques. The plaques which replicate the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, will be housed in a new gallery to be built within JA World Patten Family Finance Park. This gallery and the unique ~~special~~ display of plaques will be unveiled at a special ceremony on September 16 and 17.

“We are excited to work with Junior Achievement, an organization that has dedicated itself to children and education,” said Alan Goldberg, Event Chair and a trustee of the Leo Goodwin Foundation, the organization that is propelling the project forward. “Our goal is to encourage youth to understand our nation’s history and the importance of the Constitution, and with 50,000 children coming through the doorways at JA World, it is an ideal partnership.” The Leo Goodwin Foundation is providing a \$100,000 grant to implement this important program.

Through the Constitution Plaque Initiative plaques are acquired that are identical in size and appearance to the original documents housed in the National Archives in Washington, D.C. The Spirit of Freedom Foundation's outreach program provides students, teachers, administrators and other educators with collateral material and local fundraising programs to assist with obtaining the five-plaque set. The ultimate goal is to place these plaques in as many schools and facilities as possible across America.

“It is an exciting undertaking, and we envision these plaques as a wonderful complement to our storefront displays and other business enterprise elements,” said Melissa Aiello, president of JA South Florida. “Our goal is to inspire and prepare young people to succeed in a global economy. The motivation and encouragement that these plaques will generate we believe will definitely be inspirational so this new initiative will work in tandem with the many programs we currently have in place.”

Goldberg noted that the Spirit of Freedom is making a departure from housing the plaques at schools by selecting JA World as its home, but the educational elements and the sheer number of students that will have an opportunity to see and experience these plaques makes JA World an optimum choice.

The mission of Junior Achievement of South Florida is to ensure that every child in America has a fundamental understanding of the Free Enterprise System. The organization’s core values include:

- Belief in the boundless potential of young people
- Commitment to the principles of market-based economics and entrepreneurship
- Passion for what we do and honesty, integrity, and excellence in how we do it
- Respect for the talents, creativity, perspectives, and backgrounds of all individuals
- Belief in the power of partnership and collaboration
- Conviction in the educational and motivational impact of relevant, hands-on learning

“With a dynamic and ever-changing environment, both locally and globally, Junior Achievement welcomes new ideas and ways to engage children so that they will become productive and important members of society,” added Aiello. “We are happy to have one such idea – the Spirit of Freedom Constitutional Plaque Initiative – already rolling.”

In order to build excitement, Junior Achievement is launching several contests in the Broward County Public School system in conjunction with Civics classes where the constitution is part of the curriculum. Fifth graders will be competing to create the best poster to commemorate the program while 8th graders will be encouraged to write an essay on this initiative. The winning essays will be read at the Saturday event, while the top posters will be hung up in the Hall of Fame meeting rooms in wide display. High School students will also be participating.

The Spirit of Freedom Foundation and Junior Achievement will also be providing students with their own booklet containing the Constitution and the Bill of Rights to keep.

The first plaque initiative was launched at Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School in Richmond, Virginia in December of 2010.

Junior Achievement of South Florida and The Spirit of Freedom Foundation gratefully acknowledge the support of the numerous people that are helping make this initiative come to life.

The Steering committee includes:

Chase Adams -The Adams Law Firm
 Melissa Aiello -JA South Florida
 Louise Ball -Broward County Schools
 Caren Berg -Boardroom Communications
 Theresa Brier -Congressman Ted Deutch
 Amy Carpenter -Patten Family Companies
 Larry Creeger -National Constitution Plaque Initiative
 Jodi Danois -JA South Florida
 Scott Eble -Windmill Advertising Group
 John Hart -Hart Consulting Group, LLC
 Isabel Hebert -FPL
 Hal Herman -Worth International
 Dale Hirsch -Volunteer Broward
 Tom Lenz -National Constitution Plaque Initiative
 Richard Paul-Hus -Hypower Inc.

Brian Quail -Boys & Girls Club of Broward County
Mark Quintana -Broward County Schools
Elaine Vasquez
Julie Weidenfeld -M Power-Me
Michael Weinberg -Gateway Insurance
Kate Wesner -Congressman Allen West

The following people comprise the Host Committee: Elliot Borkson, Piero Bussani, Amy Carpenter, Congressman Ted Deutch, Howard S. Dvorkin, Evan Farrell, Helen Furia, Mary Jo Finocchiaro, Isabel Hebert, Lifestyle Magazines, State Representative Jim Waldman, Congressman Allen West, and Michael Weinberg.

The Honorary Host Committee Chairpeople are Arthur Falcone, H.Wayne Huizenga, Harry Patten and Lorraine Thomas.

The launch of The Spirit of Freedom Experience at JA World Huizenga Center at Broward College will coincide with Constitution Week. The initial event on Friday, September 16, 2011 will feature the formal unveiling of the five beautiful bronze plaques – four representing the U.S. Constitution and one representing the Bill of Rights. The following day, September 17, all of South Florida will be encouraged to participate in an exciting, patriotic and fun-filled celebration that will mark a wonderful event, and evoke memories of some of the best Independence day festivities.

Sponsorship opportunities are still available and tickets will go on sale the first week in August. Ticket price is \$250.

For more information on this program and ways to get involved, contact Jodi Danois, jodi@jasouthflorida.org (954) 979-7115.

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