

NEWS RELEASE

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Junior Achievement of Central Carolinas Welcomes Melissa Kilby as New CEO

Charlotte, NC – Thursday, April 10, 2025 – Junior Achievement of Central Carolinas (JA) is proud to announce the appointment of Melissa Kilby as its new Chief Executive Officer. Kilby, a recognized leader in youth empowerment, leadership development, and nonprofit management, brings a wealth of experience to JA as the organization continues its mission of inspiring and preparing young people to succeed in a global economy.

Kilby comes to JA following her tenure as CEO of Girl Up, an organization focused on fostering leadership and advocacy among young women worldwide. Under her leadership, Girl Up grew into a global movement, supporting young leaders across 152 countries and every U.S. state. She played a pivotal role in securing millions in funding to advance leadership opportunities for youth, shaping the organization into an influential force for change.

"Melissa Kilby's leadership and passion for youth development make her the ideal choice to guide Junior Achievement of Central Carolinas into the future," said Mike Ryan, Board Chair of Junior Achievement of Central Carolinas. "Her expertise in expanding educational initiatives and mobilizing communities will be instrumental in strengthening the delivery of our mission."

Before joining Girl Up, Kilby worked as National Director at OP3 overseeing high-profile events such as the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer series as well as serving in various roles in event production through Eventage. She holds a degree in Strategic Communication from the University of Missouri – Columbia and participated in a prestigious nonprofit leadership program at Harvard University's Kennedy School. A well-respected speaker and media contributor, Kilby has been recognized among Fortune Magazine's 40 Under 40 and featured on major news platforms such as MSNBC and Newsweek.

"I am thrilled to join Junior Achievement of Central Carolinas and to build upon its incredible legacy of empowering young people," said Kilby. "Financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and workforce readiness are crucial for today's youth, and I look forward to collaborating with our partners and community to expand opportunities for students."

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Kilby's leadership arrives at a time of growth for JA, with innovative programs like JA BizTown and JA Finance Park continuing to impact students across the region. Her vision will drive forward initiatives that ensure all young people, especially those in underserved communities, have access to hands-on financial and career education.

About Junior Achievement of Central Carolinas:

Junior Achievement of Central Carolinas (JA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preparing young people for success in a global economy. Through hands-on programs focused on financial literacy, career readiness, and entrepreneurship, JA equips students with the skills and confidence to thrive. Serving over 30,000 students annually, JA of Central Carolinas collaborates with schools, businesses, and volunteers to create meaningful learning experiences that inspire future leaders.

For more information about Junior Achievement of Central Carolinas and its programs, visit www.jacarolinas.org.

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