

**From : Junior Achievement of Michiana
Newsrelease
For Immediate Release**

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**Junior Achievement of Michiana Borrows Methods
From 'The Apprentice' TV show to Teach Job Preparedness**

***JA participant from Benton Harbor High School told 'You're Hired' for GE
internship***

St. Joseph, Michigan, July 11, 2005 – For Lakisha Favorite, age 15, participation in the Junior Achievement of Michiana program at Benton Harbor High School enabled her to hear the words made popular on “The Apprentice” TV show: “You’re Hired.”

Working in conjunction with GE Commercial Finance’s Distribution Finance unit, JA borrowed a few tactics from the hit NBC television show “The Apprentice” to make participation in a job preparedness program called “Success Skills” engaging, competitive and, of course, rewarding with a paid summer internship.

While there was no Donald Trump or cut-throat board room meetings, Lakisha competed against her peers, one of nearly 60 students participating in the program.

At the end of the JA program, Lakisha was the stand out performer who heard those long sought-after words, “You’re Hired,” and she now interns at GE’s Commercial Distribution Finance (CDF) office in St. Joseph.

“Junior Achievement really prepared us for interviews and how to get a job,” Lakisa said. “This was a great opportunity for me because I want to be a lawyer.”

While the internship was the goal, the program was designed to be motivating and realistic.

“We transported students to our offices for interviews so they could become more familiar with a work environment,” said Jim Morphey, CDF business development manager.

Three GE Human Resource managers traveled from Chicago to St. Joseph and were joined by three other local HR colleagues to conduct sixty individual 30-minute interviews with the students. Each student received immediate feedback and

coaching tips to further improve their interviewing skills. The GE team also assisted each student with completing a job application and resume.

Later, CDF provided a group feedback session, providing Best Practices and suggesting areas for improvement. CDF then selected the best candidate for a summer internship in financial services...and said, "You're hired."

"The students have already improved their ability to prepare for a meaningful job by 200% and have greatly improved their communication skills by interviewing for the internship position," Morphey said. "CDF benefited from its employees' participation in countless ways. Perhaps one of the greatest benefits is helping to build a talent-pool for our company's future."

The feedback from JA participants has been overwhelmingly positive, Morphey explained.

"CDF received many letters of thanks from the Benton Harbor High School students," Morphey said. "The following except from one such letter was characteristic of many letters received:

"Since JA, I have looked at things differently. From everyday life to the future, I look at everything different now. You made a big difference in my life."

Over a six-month period, 26 local GE employees volunteered as classroom consultants for JA at the grade school, middle school and high school level of the Benton Harbor School District.

Junior Achievement, founded in 1919, is the world's largest and fastest-growing non-profit economic education organization in the world! It reaches approximately 4 million students in over 10 countries.

About Junior Achievement

Junior Achievement of Michiana reached 8,109 students in Berrien and Cass counties in Michigan, and LaPorte, St. Joseph, and Marshall Counties in Indiana (with the exception of Michigan City, which is served by JA of Northern Indiana) this past year. Funded locally by area businesses, foundations, service clubs, and individuals, JA of Michiana partners with Intermediate School Districts, Michigan Works!, local organizations, schools, and businesses to prepare tomorrow's workforce. JA's programs, developed by educators to national standards, also meet current state educational, MEAP and ISTEP requirements. For more information, visit www.ja.org.

About Commercial Distribution Finance

Commercial Distribution Finance is a leading provider of specialized financing products and services for various industries, including agriculture, lawn & garden, marine, motor sports, RV/manufactured housing, technology, electronics & appliances, industrial products and

musical instruments. Offerings include inventory financing, accounts receivable financing, asset-based lending, private label financing, collateral management, e-commerce services and related financial products. CDF has operations worldwide. Additional information about CDF can be found online at www.gecdf.com.

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