

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Students from 15 Louisiana High Schools Explored Careers at YouthForce NOLA + Junior Achievement Career Expo**

***Seventy-three professionals gave students an inside look at high-demand, high-wage careers***

**New Orleans, La. (Mar. 22, 2021)** – More than 1,500 students from 15 high schools across Southeast Louisiana participated in the YouthForce NOLA + Junior Achievement Career Expo on March 8-11, 2021. The live virtual career exploration event convened 73 professionals and training providers in high-wage, high-demand industries to share insights to help students consider options for their future careers.

“Through the Career Expo, we’re engaging young people early on to consider their career options and the steps they can begin taking now to pursue them. This type of exploration is an important phase in a continuum that is connecting public school students to high-wage career pathways,” said Cate Swinburn, president of YouthForce NOLA. “We are grateful to the professionals who volunteered to participate in the Career Expo and especially to the sponsors that made it possible: LCMC Health, JP Morgan Chase, Phillips 66 Alliance Refinery, Lucid, and Baptist Community Ministries.”

The companies and training providers participating in the Career Expo represent YouthForce NOLA’s target industry and skill clusters – Digital Media/IT, Health Sciences, Skilled Crafts, and Business Services – which are forecasted to provide tens of thousands of high-wage, high-demand jobs locally over the next several years.

“Most high school students aren’t aware of the full spectrum of opportunities available to them. So we’re connecting our young people with working professionals to get an inside look at high-wage jobs and how to pursue them,” said Larry Washington, the president of Junior Achievement of Greater New Orleans. “It’s essential that these types of career readiness programs are integrated into the K-12 experience, and we’re grateful to the schools who share our vision and continue to partner with us.”

The YouthForce NOLA + Junior Achievement Career Expo is part of a broad effort that is building a pipeline to meet our region’s fast-growing industries’ workforce demands. The results: more prosperous graduates, employers, and communities.

“We are proud to sponsor the Career Expo and to take an active role in providing young people with tools and experiences to pursue fulfilling careers,” said Nicole Patel, Chief People Officer of Lucid. “Our region is bursting with young talent, and when they’re given the right opportunities, they’re exactly who businesses, like ours, are always looking to hire.”

As a demand-driven career readiness model, YouthForce NOLA counts on the participation of local employers to align programming with industry needs.

“As the world of work continues to evolve, employers will continue to rely on trained talent across areas of expertise, like IT, engineering, and business administration,” said Ann Janson, HRPB Manager of Phillips 66 Alliance Refinery. “We’re proud to help build a talent pipeline that will not only serve our regional economy but also our communities with jobs that allow families to thrive.”

#### **About YouthForce NOLA**

*YouthForce NOLA is an education, business, and civic collaborative that builds bridges between school and work. Through our network of partner schools, employers, training providers, and community organizations, YouthForce is opening more doors to economic opportunity for New Orleans students. Its vision is that New Orleans public school graduates will thrive economically as a result of being the most sought-after talent for hiring and advancement in our region’s high-wage career pathways.*

*More at [YouthForceNOLA.org](http://YouthForceNOLA.org).*

#### **About Junior Achievement of Greater New Orleans**

*Junior Achievement of Greater New Orleans delivers a variety of financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and work-readiness programs to nearly 35,000 students across Southeast Louisiana annually. Junior Achievement is committed to inspiring and preparing all young people, kindergarten through twelfth grade, to succeed and thrive in our regional and global economies. For more information on JA, visit [www.jagno.org](http://www.jagno.org), call 504-569-8650 or connect with Junior Achievement of Greater New Orleans on Facebook and Twitter (@JAneworleans).*

**###**