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## Junior Achievement of Washington Announces 2023 Business Hall of Fame Laureates

Auburn, WA – Junior Achievement of Washington (JA) announces three trailblazing Laureates who will be inducted during the 2023 JA Business Hall of Fame event on **Thursday, April 20, 2023**, at **The Museum of Flight** in Seattle. JA is dedicated to preparing Washington students for economic success by teaching financial literacy, work and career readiness, and entrepreneurship skills. By recognizing the impact of these diverse business and community leaders as role models, JA inspires children to reach their own goals and dreams.

### 2023 BUSINESS HALL OF FAME LAUREATES

**Stephanie Ellis-Smith**

Stephanie Ellis-Smith is the CEO and principal of the philanthropic advisory firm Phila Engaged Giving and is a Chartered Advisor in Philanthropy (CAP). She believes strongly in being a compassionate and generous member of society and has dedicated over 20 years of her professional and personal life to the social sector. In 2020, she co-founded Giving Gap (formerly “Give Bkck”), an online database of Black-founded and led organizations. Having served in a variety of capacities in the social sector—non-profit CEO, social enterprise COO, foundation and non-profit trustee, and even a corporate board member—her diverse experience and deep knowledge make her uniquely capable of being a trusted advisor to the world’s most generous families and institutions.

**John Meisenbach**

John Meisenbach established AssuredPartners MCM in 1961, and since then, his hard work and determination have catapulted the success of his company. In over 50 years of business, MCM has partnered with organizations and high-net-worth individuals to develop and implement long-term insurance strategies that meet their personal and business goals. MCM holds awards for Washington’s 100 Best Companies to Work For from Seattle Business, Washington’s Best Workplaces from the Puget Sound Business Journal, and Washington’s Top 75 Corporate Philanthropists from Seattle Business. John currently serves on multiple advisory and nonprofit boards and, throughout his career, has continuously supported local and national organizations.

**Maya Mendoza-Exstrom**

Maya Mendoza-Exstrom is Chief Operating Officer at Seattle Sounders FC. Previously she served as Sounders FC’s Senior Vice President of Legal and External Affairs, where she oversaw and advised on

the legal aspects of all club operations and strategic planning. Before joining the Rave Green, Mendoza-Exstrom was in private practice for seven years at Mendoza Law Center. With her extensive background and experience as a player, coach, coaching director, referee, and now parent in Washington Youth Soccer, Mendoza-Exstrom also oversees soccer camps, clinics, and youth club development activities. She has been a key stakeholder in all civic matters related to the organization, including Seattle's candidacy to become an official host city for the FIFA World Cup 2026, managing the organization's public benefits, to working with the various jurisdictions on feasibility and development of soccer-specific investments around the region.

### **2023 BUSINESS HALL OF FAME EVENT**

In collaboration with Presenting Sponsor Delta Air Lines, the 2023 JA Business Hall of Fame will feature an induction ceremony of the Laureates, short films about each Laureate's path to success, inspiring stories from JA student speakers, a reception, and a three-course dinner. Guests will have an opportunity to enjoy the views of The Museum of Flight's unique space and explore the exhibits. Tickets to attend this event are \$175 per person, and event sponsorship and table purchase opportunities are available. Learn more and buy tickets at <https://washington.ja.org/events/2023-ja-business-hall-of-fame>

"JA has been recognizing outstanding Washington state business leaders at this annual event since 1987. Over the last 36 years, we have honored over 130 Laureates with the Business Hall of Fame award," said Natalie Vega O'Neil, President & CEO of JA of Washington. "This year, we are excited to honor such a diverse group of leaders, each making a remarkable impact on their industry as well as people around them. The achievements of these Laureates are in direct alignment with the skills and values we teach to JA students, and they are outstanding role models for the next generation of leaders. They all have helped foster economic growth, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion advocacy, and entrepreneurial advancement and gave back to communities through their volunteer and philanthropic efforts. We hope our 2023 Laureates will inspire young people to follow their dreams, overcome obstacles, and create their own paths to success."

Delta is a long-time supporter of Junior Achievement, partnering with 30 JA chapters across five continents to spark students' interest in careers in aviation and provide mentoring and job shadow opportunities to young people across the globe. Last year, Delta extended its support of JA programs by establishing a storefront in *JA BizTown*, an experiential learning mini-town for elementary school students at the JA Education Center in Auburn, Washington. "We are thrilled to support this year's JA Business Hall of Fame event recognizing business champions within the Washington community," said Tad Hutcheson, Managing Director - Community Engagement. "Delta's mission to connect the world starts with our commitment to being a strong partner in the communities where we live, work, and serve, and we are proud to help advance Junior Achievement's mission to inspire and prepare young people to succeed in a global economy."

### **About Delta Air Lines**

Delta's mission to connect the world starts with its commitment to being a strong partner to the communities where our employees live, work, and serve. Focused on the pillars of Environment, Equity, and Education, Delta invests its resources, talent, and platform to realize a world where

everyone has equitable access to healthier neighborhoods and lasting economic opportunity. Giving back globally has been core to Delta and its culture for the past 90+ years, demonstrated by the thousands of volunteer hours and millions of dollars contributed each year by Delta, The Delta Air Lines Foundation, and Delta employees to partner organizations. Delta has been named an [honoree of The Civic 50 by Points of Light](#), the world's largest organization dedicated to volunteer service for the past four years in a row.

Headquartered in Atlanta, Delta has served as many as **200 million people** a year, taking customers across an industry-leading global network of up to **300 destinations** in over **50 countries**. More about Delta can be found on [Delta News Hub](#) and [delta.com](#), via @DeltaNewsHub on Twitter, and Facebook.com/delta.

### **About Junior Achievement (JA) of Washington**

Junior Achievement of Washington's mission is to inspire and prepare young people to succeed in a global economy. Driven by the passionate power of its volunteers, JA programs are taught by community and business mentors – individuals committed to the success and healthy development of students in Washington state and Northern Idaho. In 2022, Junior Achievement of Washington reached thousands of K-12 students with relevant, hands-on learning experiences that teach young people to manage their money, plan for their economic future, own their businesses, and develop readiness for careers or college. Visit [washington.ja.org](#) for more information.

### **About Junior Achievement USA® (JA)**

Junior Achievement is the world's largest organization dedicated to giving young people the knowledge and skills they need to own their economic success, plan for their future, and make smart academic and economic choices. JA programs are delivered by corporate and community volunteers, and provide relevant, hands-on experiences that give students from kindergarten through high school knowledge and skills in financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship. Today, JA reaches more than 3.2 million students per year in 102 markets across the United States, as part of more than 12.5 million students served by operations in 115 other countries worldwide. Junior Achievement USA is a member of JA Worldwide. Visit [ja.org](#) for more information.

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