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ANITA MARTÍNEZ NAMED SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS FOR JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT OF SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN

- *A native of Southwest Detroit, Martínez has centered her career around helping residents build financial stability and achieve academic and career success*
- *Martínez will ultimately assume the role of Chief Operating Officer following the retirement of current JASEM COO Cindy Bazner later this year*

DETROIT, Mich. (March 5, 2024) – Junior Achievement of Southeastern Michigan (JASEM), a Detroit-based nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring and preparing young people for future success in a global economy, is pleased to announce Anita Martínez has joined the senior leadership team as Senior Vice President of Operations.

In this role, Martínez will manage JASEM operations including finances, facilities management, programming, and key administrative functions. She will lead recruiting, training, evaluation, and coaching of staff, supervise key financial and operation personnel, and serve as the human resources liaison to the Board of Directors, among other duties. She was selected for the position from among more than 100 candidates.

Martínez will ultimately assume the role of Chief Operating Officer following the retirement of current COO Cindy Bazner who has worked for JASEM for over 47 years. That transition is expected to take place this summer.

“JASEM would not be here today without Cindy Bazner’s incredible dedication and leadership,” said Jason Lee, President & CEO of Junior Achievement of Southeastern Michigan. “As we began to think about succession, we were very strategic in identifying the right leader to complement our existing team and the future trajectory of JA. I have been in several circles with Anita in the Detroit nonprofit sector, and she is someone I’ve always wanted to work with. We are excited to have her join our dedicated team.”

Anita formerly served as the inaugural executive director of The Michigan Hispanic Collaborative, a nonprofit organization that helps students and young professionals navigate the complexity of college access through early career by providing support, resources and opportunities. She also previously worked with United Way for Southeastern Michigan as a community impact director of financial stability and wealth-building overseeing a \$9.6M pool of basic needs partner funded agencies impacting 135,000+ residents.

A native of Southwest Detroit, Martínez is a trailblazing first-generation college graduate with a bachelor’s degree in Organizational Studies from the University of Michigan and an MBA from Central Michigan University.

“As a parent chaperone for my four children on interactive field trips to JA Finance Park in Detroit and reviewing their JA assignments over the years, I’ve consistently been very impressed by the mission of JA and the essential financial skills it imparts to students,” Martínez said. “I am deeply honored to have been selected to contribute to the refinement of its approach and impact strategy.”

JASEM serves thousands of K-12 students and young adults ages 18-25 annually throughout the 10-county Southeastern Michigan region, providing proven programs that teach financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and workforce readiness. Martínez brings a wealth of experience in these areas to her new role.

“Anita is a well-respected nonprofit leader who has a strong passion around financial literacy and education. She cares deeply about making an impact in the community and enhancing opportunities for our young people. That’s why we felt she was the perfect candidate for this new role,” said David Flynn, partner and co-founder of Orion Solutions Group and a JASEM board member. “Anita’s experience with the United Way and The Michigan Hispanic Collaborative will be a great asset as JA looks to significantly expand its overall reach.”

As JASEM celebrates its 75th year in Detroit, Martínez will contribute to the development of the nonprofit’s strategic and operational plans and implement a financial strategy that positions the JASEM for long-term sustainability and growth. Bazner first joined the JA team back in 1977 and has helped lead and shape JASEM through the decades into the successful organization it is today.

“Cindy has been integral to the success of JASEM over so many years. She is part of the fabric of our organization and JASEM’s success can be directly attributed to her leadership,” said JASEM Board Vice Chair Rhonda Laurencelle. “Her nearly five decades of dedicated service are deeply appreciated.”

“As we look to the future, Anita will work side by side with our president and CEO Jason Lee and our leadership team to expand the impact of JA across Southeast Michigan,” added Scott Mullan, JASEM Board Chair. “Anita will be an incredible asset to our organization and complement to our team.”

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About Junior Achievement of Southeast Michigan

Founded nationally in 1919 and locally in 1949, Junior Achievement is the world’s largest organization dedicated to inspiring and preparing young people to succeed. JA offers a wide variety of proven programs that promote financial capability, work and career readiness, and business ownership. Classroom teachers and JA volunteers not only deliver JA lessons but share their experiences and serve as role models helping to positively impact young people’s perceptions about the importance of education and critical life skills. Dedicated to providing life lessons to students in grades K-12 and young adults, ages 18-25, JASEM serves youth throughout the 10-county region known as Southeastern Michigan which includes: Genesee, Lapeer, Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Shiawassee, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties. For more information, visit jamichigan.org.