

CONNECTED @ JAXTHRIVE



IN THIS ISSUE

Volunteer features, including *The JaxTHRIVE Female Empowerment Program & Bringing the Back to Bach Project to JaxTHRIVE*

Student and volunteer interviews, including *Meet Sarah Park & Welcoming a New Student*

JaxTHRIVE 2024 recent news, including our *Spread Cream Cheese Not Hate @* campaign & *The Bolles Middle School Club*

A Year in Reflection: Looking Back Upon 2023 Community Outreach Events



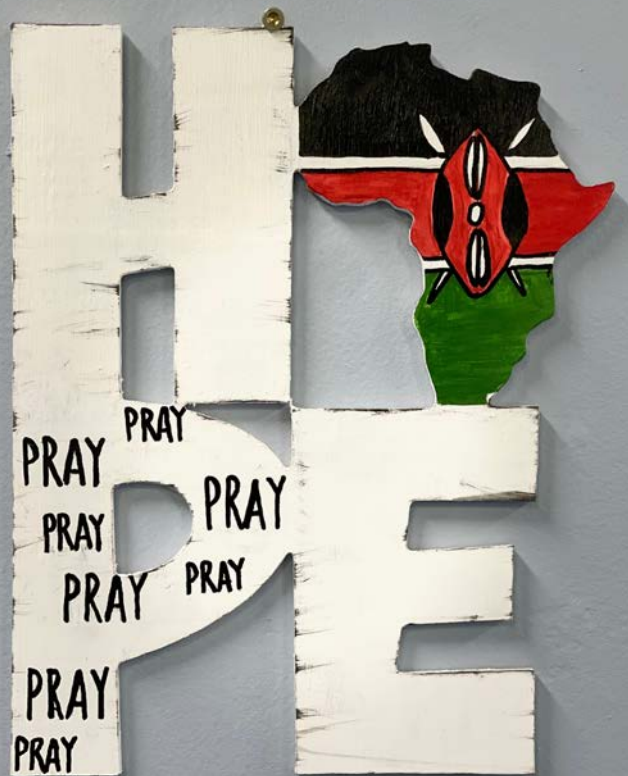
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Global Education, Global Connections



At JaxTHRIVE,
the friendships
we build will
last us a
lifetime.



LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

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Dear Readers,

Thank you for supporting the JaxTHRIVE community by flipping through the second mid-year volume of *Connected @ JaxTHRIVE!* Our focus for this publication is on highlighting the various challenges that refugees face, along with how JaxTHRIVE is facilitating their acclimation.

Throughout 2023, the JaxTHRIVE community has blossomed, with a record number of volunteers, students, and sponsors playing an active role in the furthering of our goals. Volunteers from across the nation partook in organizing a myriad of events, from a Thanksgiving-themed letter-writing workshop to a collaboration with the local Back to Bach Project.

This issue features interviews with a diverse range of students to showcase the countless ways that migration and adjustment may present themselves. By featuring both individual students and group responses, we hope to provide an insight into the varying viewpoints of the refugees at JaxTHRIVE.

We are grateful for the contribution of articles from fellow volunteers, as they have assisted in crafting a diverse newsletter. Our virtual tutors and in-person participants play a key role in JaxTHRIVE's continued success.

At JaxTHRIVE, we firmly believe in the power of personal connections in building bridges with those from around the world.

Sincerely,

Olivia Y. Owens
Co-Editor-in-Chief



Jaden R. Taher
Co-Editor-in-Chief



Donate!



Support JaxTHRIVE,
Change People's
Lives!

A NOTE FROM OUR CO-PRESIDENTS

As we begin 2024, we wanted to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude for your support of JaxTHRIVE. Your generosity has played a crucial role enabling us to achieve remarkable milestones and make a lasting impact on the lives of our refugee students.

Expanding Educational Opportunities - One of our proudest accomplishments in 2023 has been the expansion of our tutoring programs. Through our partnerships with Kim's Open Door, Refugee Assistance Alliance, and referrals from Sel Buyuksara at the River City Science Academy, we have an amazing cohort of students! We are presently serving our largest class to-date with over 65 students in both our in-person and our virtual tutoring programs!

We are continually amazed and grateful for the dedication and enthusiasm of our volunteers. We have JaxTHRIVE clubs in 9 different schools all over the world and we envision empowering more of our volunteers to establish JaxTHRIVE clubs in their own communities. In 2023, we added two new clubs, one at Paxton High School and another at Bolles Middle School. We were also excited to welcome a motivated group of virtual tutors from South Korea and Turkey who specialize in weekend tutoring for students who need flexibility.

Thanks to your support, we were able to launch weekly virtual SAT and ACT preparation classes, providing refugee and low-income students with essential resources to pursue higher education opportunities. We are designing a new class to focus on the digital SAT that will be launched in March 2024.

JaxTHRIVE-GlobalJax Partnership - We formalized a partnership with GlobalJax this year by co-hosting 5 programs with diplomats and international guests from Italy, Tunisia, Infectious Disease Specialists from 6 Latin American and South American countries, and student leaders from Iraq. Members of our Leadership Council have had the opportunity to present our JaxTHRIVE model to these global diplomats which have led to fascinating discussions!

Spread Cream Cheese, Not Hate® - JaxTHRIVE is involved in a new campaign called Spread Cream Cheese, Not Hate® which is dedicated to fostering peace and harmony among individuals of diverse faiths and cultures. It encourages understanding and acceptance of differences. This campaign kicked off January 11th with a dinner for all volunteers at Christ Episcopal Church. Volunteers were asked to take an oath to combat antisemitism, xenophobia, and all forms of hate. In appreciation, signers are provided a free bagel and cream cheese. This initiative fosters unity and open conversation among people of different backgrounds, serving as a powerful reminder of the importance of promoting tolerance, understanding, and a sense of community.

A NOTE FROM OUR CO-PRESIDENTS

Annual JaxTHRIVE Service Projects –

Back-to-School Backpack Project

Each August, we organize our Back-to-School Backpack drive to ensure that each of our students receives a brand-new backpack to start the year off right! We encourage our local JaxTHRIVE clubs to share this initiative with their members. Our students were incredibly appreciative!

Holiday-in-a-Basket

As the holidays approach in November and December, we coordinate our annual Holiday-in-a-Basket project. Volunteers are paired with newly arrived JaxTHRIVE refugee students and are asked to prepare a customized holiday bucket for their student. This year, we delivered 56 buckets filled with exciting holiday gifts, home-made treats, and motivational holiday cards. The new Bolles Middle School club jumped right in to coordinate 25 buckets which were greatly appreciated! Each student was provided with a holiday bucket on our last Super Saturday session of the year!

Creating Homes, Restoring Hope:

Since 2020, our JaxTHRIVE team has quietly helped to make a positive impact on the lives of new refugee families by providing essential support as they begin their journey to rebuild their lives. Informally, we have collected gently used furniture and business suits from donors in our community. These donations not only provide much-needed furniture but also contribute to the establishment of a supportive and nurturing environment for these families as they embark on their new chapter.

Looking Ahead:

As we reflect upon the accomplishments of this year, we are energized to continue our mission in the coming year. Together, we can build a brighter future for refugees and empower them to overcome challenges and thrive.

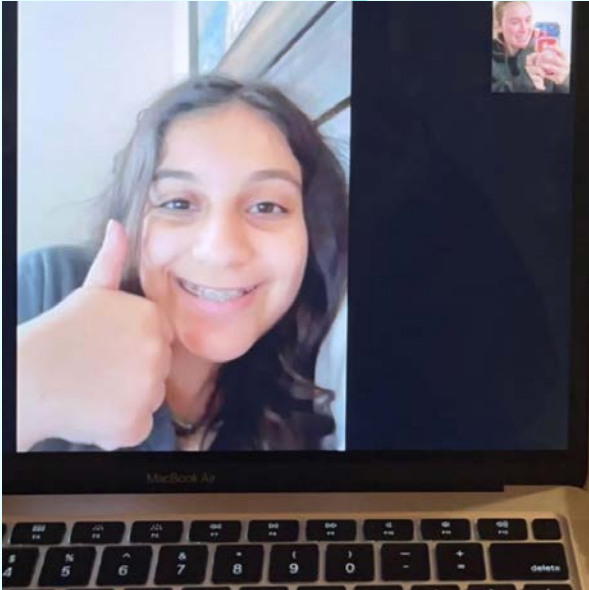
With thanks, gratitude, and so much appreciation,

Carter and Sarah

Tutoring from Maine

Lizzie Gentile

I tutor Rodina whenever she needs to meet. We have been working together for a few years. She is always willing to learn and is incredibly open-minded. Not only is she super smart, but she is also the sweetest. Our Zoom meetings are always more than just reviewing her school work, but catching up on our week. I love how happy she gets when sharing exciting things that have happened in her life. She has come so far in school and I always smile when getting updates on all her success. Rodina truly is the best and I'm so lucky I get to know her.



Growing Up Together

Ayak Akech

Volunteering for JaxThrive has been an engaging experience for me. Being born to refugee parents has helped me understand what challenges these children face and what they may be going through. Through volunteering at JaxTHRIVE, I was able to form personal connections because of our similar backgrounds and upbringings. It is inspiring watching the children as they face many challenges, but are still able to thrive in their new cultural setting.



WHAT ARE
JAXTHRIVE
STUDENTS'
FAVORITE...
TRADITIONS?

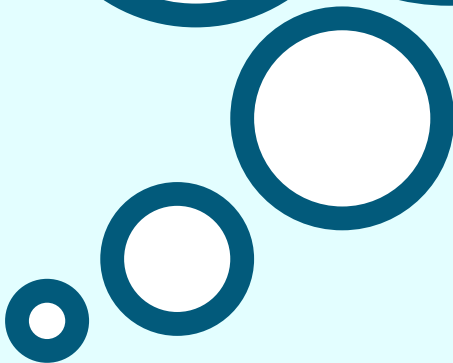


“Riding my bicycle.”

“Christmas.”

“Going to the park.”

“Eating the same foods
we ate in Afghanistan.”



Traveling All Around the World in One Place

Athok Akech

Every other Saturday, children from different corners of the world will meet. With them they bring stories, experiences, and all speak different languages. Although these children share many differences, they also share many similarities. They are children. In many of the classrooms, you would hear laughter; laughter is a universal language that exceeds borders. You don't need to know English to laugh, or to understand humor. Humor is one of the best languages to teach children, as it can unite all. After further examination of the children, one game became prominent between the different children. Soccer!!! Soccer reigned supreme, and although it caused many conflicts between the children, I admired how in different corners of the world the rules of football became persistent. They did not need to understand each other to know what was going on, since every child in their own corner of the globe was taught the rules of soccer and how to play.

Although the main objective in JaxTHRIVE is to aid the refugee children in assimilating into American life and culture. On the contrary, the children have taught me a few things as well. For example, Natalie, a kind sweet sweet-hearted girl with great artistic skills, aided me in how to draw. Unlike her, I have no creative bones in my body. Another boy, who was from Chad, conveyed how my French was subpar. Every time I talk to him in French, he aids me in my language acquisition and shares how to overcome my very Americanized accent. From my experiences at JaxTHRIVE, I learned how to play mancala, I learned various words in Farsi, I learned how to properly play soccer, I learned patience, and I learned a different perspective on life. Although the media portray these children as the forgotten, leaving their war-torn homes for a better life, I see future doctors, diplomats, scientists, artists, professional soccer players, and many more. Although the odds were stacked against them because of their horrible environment and the strain of accustoming to a new world, these children still manage to put smiles on their faces. Behind their eyes you see the bright blue gemstone lapis from Afghanistan, you see the golden dunes of the Sahara Desert, you see the intricate designs of Mayan jewelry, you see the mouth-watering bright red borscht of Ukraine. At JaxTHRIVE on a Saturday morning, my priceless journey begins around the world without a plane nor passport.



Our Trip to the Zoo

Pritha Patel

Organizing the zoo trip was an excellent idea because it helped the students interact with the local attractions and get comfortable. I think the biggest issue for people when settling into new places is the community, and by taking trips to places such as the zoo it helps them settle in and feel more comfortable in their new homes and community. I had a fantastic time on this trip and the students in my group did as well. While we were walking around the zoo, they would come up to me and the other volunteers and ask us questions about the animals and show us if they saw the animals doing something funny. The students seemed so excited about the zoo. They wanted to see as much of the zoo as possible in the two hours we were there for. It was amazing to see their enthusiasm. Overall, I think the zoo trip was a success. The volunteers and the students had a great time, and they were able to learn with and from each other while having fun.



What is JaxTHRIVE doing
to make refugees feel more
at home in the US?

“JaxTHRIVE teaches me science and helps me make art. Those make me feel more included.”

“JaxTHRIVE teaches me to play soccer better, and provides time for my friends and I to play soccer and connect.”

“I am making new friends.”

“JaxTHRIVE helps me learn how to speak better English.”

Bolles Middle School JaxTHRIVE Club

Bella Malhotra, Luke Malhotra



My name is Bella and my twin brother is Luke. We are 7th graders at The Bolles School. We are fortunate to be the heads of the JaxThrive club at the Bartram campus. Looking back at the first semester of this school year, it has been amazing how much progress the club has made to do good in our local and global community. We recently finished our December project- Holiday in a Bucket, which was so much fun! After we spread the message, it was amazing to see the student involvement and initiative. We collected over 25 buckets! While serving in JaxThrive has helped others, it has been very cool how JaxThrive has helped us become better individuals. My brother and I are both tri-sport athletes, but being involved in JaxThrive has proved to be incredibly fulfilling and character building for the two of us.

We love every bit of JaxThrive! Bolles school. We are fortunate to be the heads of the JaxThrive club at the Bartram campus. Looking back at the first semester of this school year, it has been amazing how much progress the club has made to do good in our local and global community. We recently finished our December project - Holiday in a Bucket, which was so much fun! After we spread the message, it was amazing to see the student involvement and initiative. We collected over 25 buckets! While serving in JaxThrive has helped others, it has been very cool how JaxThrive has helped us become better individuals. My brother and I are both tri-sport athletes, but being involved in JaxThrive has proved to be incredibly fulfilling and character building for the two of us. We love every bit of JaxThrive!. We are fortunate to be the heads of the JaxThrive club at the Bartram campus. Looking back at the first semester of this school year, it has been amazing how much progress the club has made to do good in our local and global community. We recently finished our December project- Holiday in a Bucket, which was so much fun! After we spread the message, it was amazing to see the student involvement and initiative. We collected over 25 buckets! While serving in JaxThrive has helped others, it has been very cool how JaxThrive has helped us become better individuals. My brother and I are both tri-sport athletes, but being involved in JaxThrive has proved to be incredibly fulfilling and character building for the two of us. We love every bit of JaxThriv Bolles school. We are fortunate to be the heads of the JaxThrive club at the Bartram campus. Looking back at the first semester of this school year, it has been amazing how much progress the club has made to do good in our local and global community. We recently finished our December project- Holiday in a Bucket, which was so much fun! After we spread the message, it was amazing to see the student involvement and initiative. We collected over 25 buckets! While serving in JaxThrive has helped others, it has been very cool how JaxThrive has helped us become better individuals. My brother and I are both tri-sport athletes, but being involved in JaxThrive has proved to be incredibly fulfilling and character building for the two of us.

We love every bit of JaxThrive!

JaxTHRIVE Executive Director Elizabeth Magnano and Volunteers Olivia Owens and Jaden Taher Meet With Bolles' Bartram JaxTHRIVE Club



Held on January 19th, the discussion consisted of examining the various “push” and “pull” factors that influence refugees on their immigration journey to the US. Students engaged in insightful discussions on how they may leave an impact on JaxTHRIVE through a personalized leadership project. Ideally, each student’s project should align with their passions and have the potential to pave the way for a futuristic JaxTHRIVE.

Female Empowerment Program

Maya Jones

Last January, JaxTHRIVE started a new female-focused program to target the issues of female health and empowerment. This past summer we took a group of refugee girls from Afghanistan and Sudan to watch the Barbie movie. It was a great day for bonding and an entertaining summer activity. The girls all enjoyed the movie and commented on the stark contrast between women's freedoms in the Western world compared to their home countries. The "can do" attitude of Barbie was inspiring to them and empowered their sense of independence and ability. On another day, we discussed female health issues. In many of the countries these young women came from, female sanitation products are either rare or nonexistent. Self-care is often not discussed. This day was a great introduction to many tips for healthy habits. We talked about nutrition, a balanced wholesome diet, healthy eating habits, and fueled our bodies with homemade delicious smoothies. To wrap up the wonderful day, we had a yoga class and taught the girls that along with healthy eating, exercise and moving your body is another great way to take maintain good health. Many of the girls had never heard of yoga and were excited to try it. They loved the experience and expressed a desire to continue. All in all, the female empowerment program has been lots of fun for me as well as the girls, and very educational for them. I am excited to continue this educational initiative with them in 2024!



WHAT DO
JAXTHRIVE
STUDENTS...
MISS FROM
BACK HOME?



“My toy robot.”

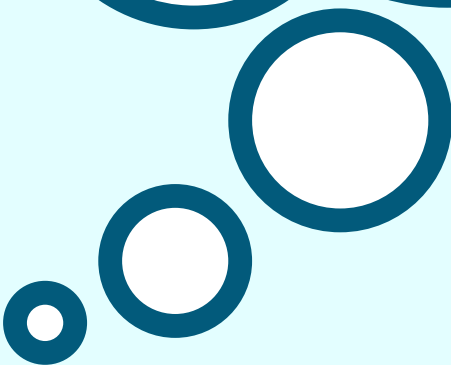
“My uncle.”

“New Years”

“My family.”

“The fun music and
dance styles of
Burundi.”

“Eid”



Bringing the Back to Bach Project to JaxTHRIVE

Sarah Park

“Where words fail, music speaks” – Hans Christian Anderson

I believe this quote captures the true essence of music, a universal language that has the power to unite humankind. At JaxTHRIVE, we create friendships and mentor refugee students through language, transcending its boundaries. I have been playing the violin for over a decade and find immense joy in sharing the beauty of music with others. In the summer of 2023, I met a friend who is involved in the broader scope of sharing music with underserved communities through The Back to Bach Project. This global initiative is committed to bringing the gift of music to children with less access to arts education. Inspired by this mission, I founded the Jacksonville, FL Chapter. We had the honor to share classical music at our inaugural event at one of the JaxThrive Super Saturdays. As it was many of the refugee students' first time listening to live classical music, it was a very special moment to see their reactions while listening to the music. Our performance included a diverse selection of solo and chamber music pieces, including Mozart's Eine Kleine Nachtmusik. Furthermore, we provided a few tips and steps for refugee students interested in starting on the journey of learning an instrument, followed by a Q&A session and a fun quiz game with prizes. It was inspiring to hear some students inquire about how they could further pursue learning an instrument after the performance, as one of our goals was to disseminate classical music to others. I am thrilled that we could bring The Back to Bach Project to JaxThrive and share the joy of classical music with refugee students.



GobbleGratitude: The Power of “Thank You”

Jaden Taher

In the midst of the bustling beginning of the holiday season, JaxTHRIVE students passed around a tub of pencils and handed each other pieces of paper, entering a period of deep reflection. One week before Thanksgiving, JaxTHRIVE students wrote letters of thankfulness to someone in their life that they appreciated and valued. With all the commotion of the holidays, one can easily overlook the positive aspects of our lives: Thanksgiving provides the occasion to hone in on our awareness and gratitude to those around us. Throughout my life, I have come to learn that writing allows a sense of reflection for the author and personal sentiment for the reader that is unmatched by other forms of communication. Thus, I decided to guide JaxTHRIVE students on how to craft a compelling, meaningful, and organized letter of gratitude. The workshop, known as GobbleGratitude, valued student-to-student interactions and began with a five-step template for students to work off. It included a greeting, a “Thank You” clause, an impact clause, a gratitude clause, and a sign-off clause. Students were encouraged to thank someone in their life for an action of any magnitude - from a warm meal to a supportive conversation. Living in the US, we tend to take many aspects of our privileged lives for granted, and reading what made the refugees feel warmth was extremely insightful. In fact, the majority of students chose to thank Kim Bogart, the founder and director of Kim’s Open Door, the organization that JaxTHRIVE partners with for our in-person Super Saturdays. At the end of the seminar, the students read aloud their letters to their peers. It was truly motivating to see the smile of joy on Kim’s face, and the smiles of gratitude on the students’ faces.

GobbleGratitude:
JaxTHRIVE
Thanksgiving-
Themed Letters
of Gratitude
Writing Seminar

Jaden Taher





Welcoming A New Student

Olivia Owens



The first thing our newest student said to me was an Afghani saying that loosely translates to “I am beautiful through your eyes.” I had complimented her, and in her culture, it is considered odd to respond with “thank you” in that scenario.

This was a moment that truly brightened my day because it reminded me of the impactful work JaxTHRIVE does. I felt so honored to not only be helping but also to be learning. Our student and her six siblings were born in Afghanistan, spent years as refugees in India, and arrived on American soil only weeks ago. “It was a dream come true for us,” she told me. However, her family underwent so much hardship to get here.

Despite the political and economic turmoil that caused her family to leave the countries, our student and her siblings had lives full of friendships and passions in them. No matter how hard things got for her family, there were still things that they loved in every place they lived, which made it that much more difficult to leave. Our student described leaving her home country as if she had been “going up a hundred stairs and then fell all the way down.” When she feels homesick, our student will sit with her family and share memories of the beautiful moments that life has gifted. This year, she is earning her bachelor’s degree. As the eldest, she helps to run the family and makes sure her siblings are well and educated. She mentioned that “starting a life from zero is not easy to do, especially because your home country is like your second mother.” Thankfully, her family is doing well in Jacksonville now. They are happy to be in the US and everyone at JaxTHRIVE is even happier to meet our student along with her kind family and listen to their inspiring story.

Introducing... Feriha



What is your name and where are you from?

My name is Feriha and I am from Afghanistan.

What's one tradition you miss from your home country?

I miss Eid. I would visit family and friends at their houses and help cook. I still celebrate Eid in Jacksonville, but most of my family is not here.

What is JaxThrive doing to make you feel more at home in the US?

The activities at JaxThrive make me feel most at home. I like learning science and making art. That makes me feel included.

What could we do to make you feel more at home?

Sometimes people can be mean. Maybe if more people remembered to be kind.

Are you in touch with family members back in Afghanistan?

Sometimes I call my family. It is hard to be away from them.



Dance Camp Anaka Davidsen



My name is Anaka Davidsen and I am a sophomore at the Episcopal School of Jacksonville. I first started volunteering at JaxTHRIVE during my freshman year of high school. I enjoyed spending time with the greatest kids and I formed the best connections. I have been a competitive dancer for over seven years but I've been dancing since I was two years old. Dance has consistently been one of the biggest parts of my life and has made such a tremendous impact on me. I have been so fortunate to learn the art of dance for the past twelve years. I wanted to spread my love for dancing to the girls who have maybe never taken a dance class in their lives. Towards the end of ninth grade, I suggested the idea of adding dance as a part of the art rotation on Saturdays. My friends from our local dance studio and I taught a few times and it was very successful. I wanted to continue spreading my passion for dance, so, over the summer, I created a two-day dance camp. Girls from ages 6-14 participated and the camp consisted of dance and various arts and crafts. During the dance portion, my dance friends and I went over common dance steps from various styles of dance such as ballet and jazz. Then we learned a jazz dance combination to the song "Roar" by Katy Perry. The song was purposely selected because the meaning of the song is about overcoming challenges and getting back up on your feet when someone or something comes along and knocks you down. Then, we rotated to making arts and crafts. The girls especially enjoyed making friendship bracelets and were very creative while painting. It was so cool seeing the girls tap into their creative side and having lots of fun in the process!

PVHS biotech student earns presidential scholar award recognition



Ponte Vedra High School senior Mira Bhutani was chosen as the Career and Technical Education U.S. Presidential Scholar representing St. Johns County for her work in the school's biotech academy.

Congratulations to Mira Bhutani! She was a former JaxTHRIVE Leadership Council Member and has recently won the Presidential Scholar Award. Mira has made JaxTHRIVE proud with her hard work and we wish her luck in the future.

Spread Cream Cheese Not Hate®

Help JaxTHRIVE by uniting as a community and vowing to help keep everyone safe. Sign the pledge, take action against antisemitism, and receive a free bagel with cream cheese!

SPREAD CREAM CHEESE NOT HATE®

PLEDGE AGAINST HATE!

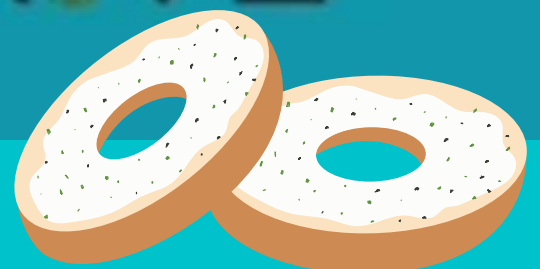
*Join us as we unite to take the pledge to combat antisemitism and **all** forms of hate.*

Click below to sign the pledge and receive your free bagel and cream cheese on Sunday, January 28th between 10:30am-1pm at Trasca & Co, 155 Tourside Dr #1500 in Ponte Vedra Beach

**SIGN THE
PLEDGE!**



jaxTHRIVE



Meet Sarah Park

Olivia Owens



Since her 6th grade school year, Sarah Park has been an active volunteer and tutor at JaxTHRIVE. Sarah is now a junior at the Bolles School and is co-president at the organization along with Carter Magnano. She began by getting connected through the community outreach program with the Bolles Middle School robotics team and loved helping from the very first day. Another way to get involved is to sign up for in-person volunteering on the JaxTHRIVE website. Every other Saturday, in-person volunteering occurs from 9:30 am-1 p.m. The frequency of the volunteering allows for close relationships with the refugee students. During our interview, Sarah said that “it is hard for the kids to fit in with the school system because it’s based on grade level not capabilities.” JaxTHRIVE is tailored for middle and high school student volunteers but the students are K-12. Volunteers can also choose an age group and rotate around. Sarah likes to help the students with reading, arts, and especially science. She also plays soccer with them sometimes. Sarah mentioned that it is really inspiring to work with the students. Her favorite part is watching the proficiency and growth in their learning and the connection with the students does not stop at academics. Sarah was among the volunteers who took some of the refugee girls to see “Barbie” in the theater. She said they had a blast and loved the female empowerment! There are also plenty of opportunities to get involved coming up. Sarah loves the Fall Backpack Drive where volunteers purchase and fill backpacks with supplies and encouraging notes for the students. Sarah loves helping at JaxTHRIVE and she hopes to meet new volunteers soon!



Q What have JaxTHRIVE students learned from a friend that comes from a different culture? **X**

“I learned kindness from them.”

“They taught me how to play soccer.”

“I have learned so much from my new friends. Many of them taught me English.

“I learned that they have different values. There is always something to learn from them.”

JaxTHRIVE Experiences

Addie Scott

Jax Thrive is a great program that allows a deeper connection to immigrant students. The subjects studied are engaging for the immigrants and volunteers, including science, English, soccer, arts, other activities. A few months back, I had an exciting time practicing with the high school age refugee soccer players and their coaches during a Saturday volunteer day. My friends and I played alongside them in scrimmages and played a creative game that almost resembled soccer volleyball. I found that some of the students grew closer to my friends and I when we took our time together outside of the classroom and onto the playing field. It relaxed the students and made them more comfortable talking with us. My first-time volunteering, I was able to make floral art with two young girls and discuss their love for arts and their dream careers. It was so special to talk to the girls about their experiences, and to see their eyes light up when they talked about becoming artists when they are grown.



One final time I will always remember from volunteering on a Saturday happened when a student taught me some of his culture's dances at lunch time, and we danced together while the other highschoolers cheered. It was incredibly funny to watch me stumble along with his polished dance moves. Not only do we teach the refugee students, but they teach us about their traditions as well. Each time volunteering is extremely engaging, and we learn more about how to better help the students with academic subjects and communication. Some of the most effective strategies to create trust and friendship amongst the students are to make eye contact, speak with clarity and at a level they can hear, and to be patient if they have difficulty understanding instruction. Sometimes, if verbal communication is too difficult, using body language to communicate is an encouraged way to reach them. I have also found that if you make them smile or laugh and ask about their interests, they will become more present in the activities we do together. Creating a stronger bond amongst the refugee students gives them a wider support system to become acclimated to living in the U.S. We talk about our favorite holidays, family traditions, and interests like dancing, sports, or music to establish common ground between us. Finding common interests is a useful strategy to build friendships with the refugees and give them a safe connection as they explore American life.

Learning is a Two-Way Street at JaxTHRIVE

Carter Magnano

Students whose parents' income is in the top 20% of the country are seven times as likely to score above 1300 on the SAT, compared with those whose parent incomes are in the bottom 20% of the country. This disparity results in part from standardized test preparation, which comes at a high premium for many who are unable to afford such focused and customized tutoring. Last year, we received requests from a few of our JaxTHRIVE students who needed regular help preparing themselves for their upcoming standardized tests. In response, we created a weekly program to assist our students with both the SAT and the ACT test using Zoom tutoring. For the SAT program, Kai McLeod and I partnered together; I would teach the Math sections and Kai would teach the English sections. We are now developing a curriculum for the new digital SAT test, since the SAT will now only be offered as an online test beginning in 2024, with the first test offered in March. We also created a weekly ACT prep class, led by two of our senior tutors which is available for students who are interested in taking the ACT in 2024.





Meet Caitlyn Luce

Olivia Owens

“I can’t think of another program like JaxTHRIVE,” said Caitlyn Luce, who is currently a college graduate and cheerleader for the Roar of Jacksonville. She first heard of JaxTHRIVE through her best friend years ago. Caitlyn got involved with SAT help to begin. Now, she has become the virtual manager of tutoring on Wednesday and she monitors other tutors. Caitlyn mentioned that when she started working at JaxTHRIVE, she “did not see the full impact at first.” However, after spending more time with both the refugees and other tutors she realized just how important JaxTHRIVE was to the community. Caitlyn is consistently impressed by the youth in the tutors who help. The diverse age groups that assist in tutoring demonstrate how much people want to help others, and Caitlyn is inspired by this fact. One of her favorite memories from working with the organization was going to package meals with all the kids, so they could all help the community. Caitlyn liked this because being active around Jacksonville is important for everyone, no matter what their personal life is like. She believes that JaxTHRIVE has made an impact on the kids by showing them that community service is for everyone.

Introducing... Mohammed



What is your name and where are you from?
I am Mohammed. I am from the Middle East.

What is one tradition you celebrated in your home country
that you miss?

Newroz, it is the Kurdish new year. We celebrate it in March. I
dance and eat with my family and my friends.

What is JaxThrive doing to make you feel more at home in the
US?

I am making new friends whenever I play soccer with the other
boys.

How difficult was it to leave your home country?

It was really hard to leave home. My family had to because
education was very bad. There was always so much war all
the time.

2023 Events

February, 2023 -

JaxTHRIVE schools and volunteers make personalized Valentine's Day Cards for all students.

March, 2023 -

JaxTHRIVE hosts its annual gala, highlighting the various contributions that volunteers and sponsors make to the advancement of JaxThrive.

August, 2023 -

JaxTHRIVE volunteers gather to train for the upcoming year, and volunteers host the annual backpack drive.

September, 2023 -

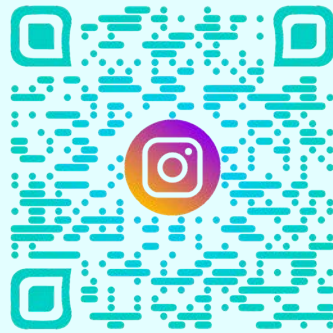
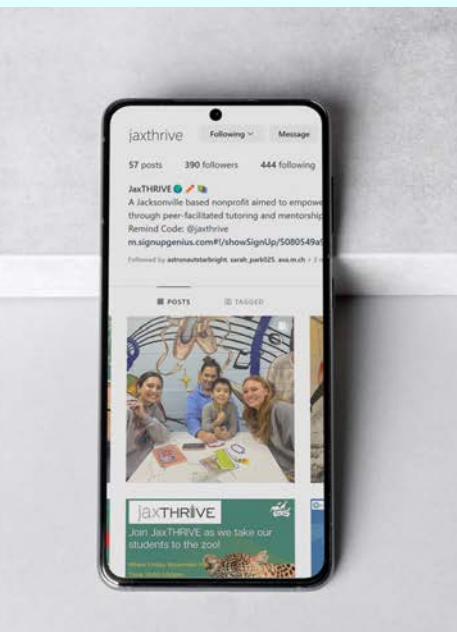
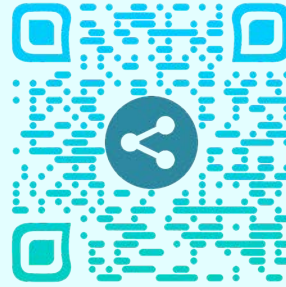
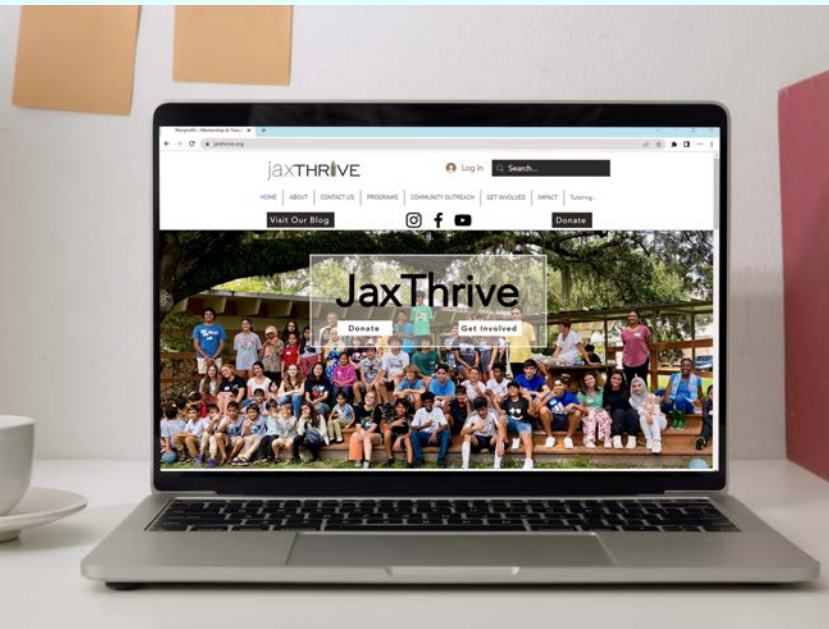
Bolles, PVHS, Episcopal, Paxton, and UNF showcase JaxTHRIVE to their students on club day.

October, 2023 - The Bolles JaxTHRIVE Club gives back to the students at Sanctuary on 8th street.

November, 2023 - JaxTHRIVE hosts Back To Bach and GobbleGratitude.

December, 2023 - JaxTHRIVE hosts its annual Holiday in a Bucket Drive, where volunteers prepare curated gift baskets for all students.

Learn more about JaxTHRIVE!



Donate Today!

