

FEATURED

JAG hosts Financial Fitness

By Kirk McKnight
Editor
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WHS students Tawnee Tahbo (from left) Bailey Monesmith, Molly Melfi, Western Alliance's Eduard Rumbo and students Layla Santee and Brinley Tahbo participate in a simulation last Tuesday during Financial Fitness. Students were put through various scenarios resembling real-life situations to see how they would react. (Courtesy photo)



Last Tuesday (Jan. 14), Wickenburg High School's JAG (Jobs for Arizona Graduates) program hosted Financial Fitness for all WHS seniors. "We think it is such a fun way to teach important budgeting skills before the Class of 2025 graduates," said JAG Program Director Rachel Willis.

The event was made possible by organizations such as the Arizona Council on Economic Education (ACEE). "The Arizona Council on Economic Education is committed to teaching all Arizona students to become financially responsible in work and life," said ACEE Director of Student and Teacher Services Kathy Pondy. "The Financial Fitness in Action (FFA) program provides an opportunity for students to gain important personal finance skills that will impact their future. Participating in a real-world budgeting simulation like FFA allows students to learn what they will experience in their adult life while still in high school. This program enhances and supports classroom instruction, enabling students to have the skills to build a secure financial future and make sound choices that will impact their long-term well-being."

According to Willis, students participated in a real-life simulation where they get a salary and have to create a budget going to different stations to purchase necessary items. "They had to go to the housing table to find a housing option that might be right for them and within their budget," said Willis. "They needed to go purchase insurance, select a vehicle, and decide on a cellular plan and a grocery and meal plan."

The activity also included a wheel the students would spin to "see what unexpected life event happened to them." Regarding the exercises, Pondy said, "Financial education is crucial as it empowers students to make informed decisions. Students who understand the importance of budgeting, saving and investing, managing debt, along with other crucial personal finance skills,

feel confident about their future and are better equipped to gain independence and resiliency. By understanding personal finance skills and tools, students are better suited to navigate the complexities of the financial world, preventing common money mistakes."

Acknowledging those who assisted with the event, Willis said, "The simulation is just meant to help seniors think about their future plans and better prepare for life after high school. We are super grateful that so many local business leaders are coming in to help us run the stations. This would not be possible without them."

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