



# JAMES RIVER LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

*A year-long program for high school students who are inspired to impact the future of the James River, educating, and empowering participants with tools, methods, and resources to become influencers for the environment*

**2019-2020 Session Dates**  
**June 10-12<sup>th</sup> | Nov. 3-4<sup>th</sup> | Jan. 25<sup>th</sup> | May 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**James River Leadership Academy will ...**

**◆ Engage ◆ Develop ◆ Train ◆ Inspire ◆**



**Future Leaders through...**

**◆ Team building exercises ◆ Community-Based Actions ◆  
◆ Environmental discussion ◆ Outdoor training ◆**

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## Program Overview

Within the James River's vast 10,000 square-mile watershed, the collective impact of our communities on the health of the river is increasing. To protect our natural resources, the James River needs strong community leaders to educate, advocate, and engage citizens to take action for the health and responsible use of the James River and Virginia's natural resources.

After contributing to outdoor and environmental education experiences in the Richmond, VA area for years, the James River Association created the concept for a leadership program to answer the question of "what's next?" for the future of the James. The James River Leadership Academy (JRLA) provides a skill building and training opportunity for students who are passionate and committed to protecting our environment to take action on its behalf.

The goal of JRLA is to **engage, develop, train, and inspire** students who have an expressed interest in the environment and the James River. The program is designed to encourage, support and sustain development of young people into dedicated stewards who have the leadership skills, tools, and resources necessary to become leaders for the environment. Students are also encouraged to further grow and develop in their personal, academic, and professional goals.

Twenty 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade student participants will be recruited from high schools across the James River basin to participate in the year-long program. JRLA will occur over four Leadership Sessions throughout the year for skill building workshops, discussions, team building exercises, environmental ethics, and outdoor appreciation. Over the course of these Leadership Sessions, students will design and implement Capstone Projects with input from professionals in the field.

The culmination of the year-long program is the "Leadership Launch and Environmental Symposium" which will highlight, share, and build momentum around students' Capstone Projects. Students will deliver a formal presentation on their projects, and be exposed to the wide range of volunteer and career opportunities. This reunion and workshop component will aid students' development of leadership, conservation skills, and learning beyond their year in JRLA.



## Program Itinerary

***JRLA is a year-long commitment in which students will participate in four Leadership Sessions that will include discussions, team building exercises, environmental ethics, and outdoor appreciation. More detailed information and directions to Leadership Session locations will be distributed upon acceptance into the program.***

<b>Session One</b>	Monday, June 10, 2019	Fueling the Passion, Self Awareness and Team Building	<b>Paddling/Camping</b>
	Tuesday, June 11, 2019		
	Wednesday, June 12, 2019	Analysis of River Issues	<b>Meeting Space, TBD</b>
<b>Session Two</b>	Saturday, November 3, 2019	Inspiring Our Commitment	<b>Meeting Space, TBD</b>
	Sunday, November 4, 2019	Working Groups	
<b>Session Three</b>	Saturday, January 25, 2020	Inspiring Our Commitment & Working Groups	<b>Meeting Space, TBD</b>
<b>Session Four</b>	Saturday, May 2, 2020	Project Symposium and Celebration	<b>Meeting Space, TBD</b>

### **Between JRLA Sessions:**

**JRLA participants will be required to “check-in” on social media outlets with blog posts, photos, and short reports on Capstone Project progress and current news. JRLA staff will provide an ongoing list of events and opportunities throughout the watershed so students stay engaged with community-based environmental awareness. Students will also be required to work with mentors outside of Leadership Sessions to enhance Action Projects.**

***Applicants must be available for the entirety of all Leadership Sessions including overnights. All materials, gear and meals are provided. Participants must provide reliable transportation to and from Leadership Sessions and necessary personal items.***



## Program Commitments

*The following is a compilation of the commitments made by all JRLA participants. These commitments are essential to support productive and safe Leadership Sessions. JRLA staff reserve the right to immediately remove any JRLA participants from a Leadership Session in the event that these commitments are not kept. Please revisit this agreement when completing your application.*

**JRLA Participants** commit to the following:

1. Availability for the entirety of each Leadership Session. Participating in only a portion of a Session is not permissible.
2. Ensuring that all necessary paperwork (Emergency Contact Form, Health Form, Parental/Guardian Consent) is completed thoroughly and returned on time.
3. Working hard, staying positive, communicating honestly and openly, and reaching out to new friends from diverse backgrounds throughout the year.
4. Planning a Capstone Project with assistance from a professional mentor throughout the year to be completed by May 2020.
5. Participating in all Leadership Sessions in ways that support a cohesive team and individual growth; including absolutely no use or possession of tobacco, drugs, alcohol, or weapons, refraining from pursuing physical or intimate relationships during the Sessions, and communicating with adults if you ever feel uncomfortable with another participant's behavior.

**James River Leadership Academy staff** commit to the following:

1. Facilitating inspiring and engaging Leadership Sessions.
2. Providing positive, supportive, attentive leadership throughout the experience.
3. Providing all major equipment, materials, supplies, meals/snacks during Leadership Sessions.
4. Teaching all necessary outdoor skills needed to successfully complete JRLA.
5. Providing a wide variety of educational experiences related to the James.
6. Making the safety of JRLA participants the priority; staff with training in canoe instruction, Wilderness First Responder, CPR and First Aid will always be present.



## Frequently Asked Questions

**What is JRLA?** The James River Leadership Academy is a year-long program consisting of leadership development and skill building curriculum designed for 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students who are passionate and committed to protecting the future of our natural resources in Virginia, including the James River.

**What is the goal of JRLA?** JRLA is designed to engage, develop, train and inspire participants in preparation of taking personal and community-wide action toward addressing environmental issues. JRLA will equip participants with tools, methods, and resources to become leaders for the environment as well as continue further growth and development in their personal, academic, and professional careers.

**When is JRLA?** Accepted JRLA students will meet for the entirety of four Leadership Sessions throughout the year:

Session One: June 10<sup>th</sup> - June 12<sup>st</sup>, 2019 (overnight)

Session Two: November 9<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019 (overnight)

Session Three: January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Session Four: May 2<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**Where will JRLA take place?** Most Leadership Sessions will take place at the James River Ecology School, a residential environmental education facility located on Presquile National Wildlife Refuge near Hopewell, Virginia. Other Leadership Sessions will take place throughout the watershed in wilderness settings such as state parks, historic points of interest, and riverside campsites.

**What are JRLA's prerequisites?** A successful JRLA candidate will have an expressed interest in the environment and concern for the future of the James River. Other desired qualities include outdoor experience and ambitions for pursuing higher education or careers in any field of study. Students will be required to complete an application and obtain two positive letters of recommendation, one from a current teacher and one from an unrelated adult they know personally.

**Who is involved in JRLA?** The James River Association's Education Staff will lead all Leadership Sessions, and rely on the technical skills of partners including: engineers, restoration technicians, wildlife biologists, land-management staff, green-building architects, policy specialists, and other partners interested in engaging with students as mentees. The JRLA student team will consist of rising 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders attending any school within the James River watershed.

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## Frequently Asked Questions Continued

### What can I expect to learn from JRLA?

#### *Leadership and Communication:*

Throughout JRLA, students will be exposed to the theory and practice of leadership, teamwork, and personal behavior. Exceptional behavior involves commitment to the group, positive attitude and cooperation to achieve goals. Students will learn to:

- Work effectively as a member of a diverse team
- Appropriately communicate ideas and concerns on individual and group levels
- Accurately identify strengths, skills, and areas for growth in developing leadership styles in self and others
- Display appropriate initiative in a leadership role with peers
- Demonstrate effective problem-solving and planning skills
- Display excellent and consistent public speaking skills

#### *Environmental Studies and Ethics:*

Students will develop tools to apply environmental problem solving skills to address current issues facing the James River. Exposure to the James River and surrounding wilderness areas will provide practice for *Leave No Trace* ethics and other safety protocols. Students will learn to:

- Consistently practice sound safety skills and leave every natural space better than they found it
- Use observation and interpretive skills to develop an understanding and respect for the environment
- Demonstrate and convey an understanding, appreciation, and respect for the James River
- Transfer appreciation and understanding to daily life

**What is a “Capstone Project”?** One of the core goals of JRLA is to prepare students to take action on behalf of the James River and the environment. An opportunity to fulfill a project within their community will allow students to put new skills into practice. This project will be designed and led by individual students, assisted by mentors, and may serve any purpose in which students are most interested.

**How much time does JRLA require?** In addition to each Leadership Session, students should expect to spend necessary time for Action Project planning and implementation (project dependent). A successful JRLA student will commit as much time as needed for thorough work and a high caliber of participation.

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## Frequently Asked Questions Continued

**How much does JRLA cost?** JRLA participation will be free of charge to students and JRLA staff will provide necessary materials, supplies, gear, and meals for the duration of the program. Students are expected to be prepared with their own personal items as well as reliable transportation to and from Leadership Sessions.

**I am a rising 9th grade student, can I apply?** The JRLA program is designed for students who have already completed at least one year of high school. The transition to the high school environment can be a fun and challenging learning process, and may also not be the best time to commit to an extra-curricular program of this level.

**I am a rising 12th grade student, can I apply?** Rising seniors are not excluded from applying; however, the JRLA staff encourages these students to evaluate the extra responsibilities they may encounter during senior year. Leadership positions like student government, team captain, club roles, etc. are usually held by motivated upper classmen. In addition, seniors have the extra stress of college applications, Advanced Placement tests, and ACT/SAT preparation. Please consider the level of commitment required for this program before applying.

**How do I learn more?** Visit <http://jrava.org/students-of-the-james/james-river-leadership-academy/> to download a 2019-2020 James River Leadership Academy application, or contact Charles Johnson, JRA's Watershed Educator at [Cjohnson@jrava.org](mailto:Cjohnson@jrava.org) or (804) 788-8811, ext. 220.

Applications can be submitted to the email address above or by mail to:

James River Association  
Attn: Charles Johnson  
211 Rocketts Way, Suite 200  
Richmond, Virginia 23231



## Meet the JRLA Staff!

*The following James River Association Staff will be involved for the duration of JRLA.*



**Charles Johnson**  
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### About the James River Association

The James River Association is a member-supported nonprofit organization founded in 1976 to serve as a guardian and voice for the James River. Throughout the James River's 10,000-square mile watershed, the James River Association works toward its vision of a fully healthy James River supporting thriving communities. With offices in Lynchburg, Richmond and Williamsburg, the James River Association is committed to protecting the James River and connecting people to it.