

Your BRAIN and your money — two things you shouldn't waste

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Jay Strelecki, a junior majoring in marketing management, shares his college experience with BCLC students.

Spending money is incredibly easy. Managing it, not so much.

So many people learn about financial responsibility the hard way, through empty bank accounts and hefty bills. With buying ability at our fingertips from an early age, it is more important than ever to engage students and community members in fiscal planning.

Lillian Prince, an associate lecturer at The University of Akron College of Business Administration, organized an event, supported by a grant from the Institute for Leadership Advancement, designed to help educate young people on financial literacy, and to give her students a chance to give back to their community.

Necessary life skills

Financial literacy – understanding how money works, how to manage it, how to invest it and how to donate it – is a teachable and necessary life skill that can be applied to many fields, says Prince.

Earlier this summer Prince created BRAIN, Inc., a nonprofit designed in part to increase minority high school students' awareness and participation in biostatistics and health science fields. One of its missions is encouraging them to see how statistics and research skills have unlimited applications – for themselves personally and professionally.

Inspired by that work, she wanted to create a real-life learning and leadership opportunity for her students from her online Business Statistics course. She worked with **Marlise Ramsely**, a counselor at Buchtel Community Learning Center (BCLC), brought in motivational speaker and finance professional **Kevin "Kayr" Robinson**, and recruited area financial professionals for events hosted at BCLC on Nov. 20 and 21.

Robinson spoke to both middle school and high school students on Friday, using the struggles he overcame in life and school as inspirational learning tools to encourage BCLC students to make smart choices where money and work are concerned.



Kevin "Kayr" Robinson

Personalized advice

Another element of the program on Friday was a lunch offered to select middle and high school, which allowed Robinson and CBA students an opportunity to offer more personalized advice and guidance about college life, budgeting and managing time.

Saturday offered a financial literacy breakfast that was open to the public. Local professionals at stations educated participants about insurance, retirement funds, budgeting and credit. Community adults and students moved around the stations learning about each topic in 15-20 minute segments.

CBA students helped cook breakfast and engaged with participants and professionals at the stations. Surveys were emailed to both Friday and Saturday participants for further analysis on the effectiveness of the events.



Daniel Berzinskas, a junior majoring in finance, helps make the pancakes for the financial literacy breakfast.

The Institute for Leadership Advancement in the College of Business Administration is made possible through the generous support of The J.M. Smucker Company. The institute is dedicated to growing leaders who use their skills to produce positive change in their community. This financial literacy program was made possible through the institute's faculty mini-grant program, a program that allows CBA faculty to request small grants that serve to enhance the student experience as it relates to leadership, developed both in and out of the classroom.

■ Story by **Samantha Sipe**