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There is no question both Maine and the nation are facing tough, economic times; yet despite the challenges, Jobs for Maine's Graduates is succeeding beyond expectations. A study just released by the Maine Department of Labor reveals that the investment Jobs for Maine's Graduates has put into preparing Maine's young people for the work force is paying off — and paying off big.

According to the study, six years after graduating from high school JMG's Class of 2000 was making 14% more per quarter than the other 22- to 24-year-old workers in Maine. These young people, who had been identified as being at risk of dropping out, are not just surviving after high school, they are thriving.

Governor John Baldacci, who is currently the Board Chair for Jobs for America's Graduates, says of JMG, "The program works, no ifs, ands, or buts about it. JMG is very successful in positioning these young people to continue their education and to make it in the labor market."



The DOL study also shows that along with higher wages, JMG graduates are working in jobs that offer opportunities for advancement and education. They are being promoted to managerial positions, and the vast majority of them, 81%, are choosing to work and live right here in Maine.

John Dorrer, the Director of the Center for Workforce Research and Information for the DOL says the fact that more JMG students are choosing to put their education and skills to work in their home state is critical for Maine's economy. "Any Mainer who cares about the future needs to care about this. The future will be built on the skills of the people we are preparing today. JMG is playing a critical role in that preparation."

One of the key components of JMG's curriculum is decision-making skills. Nowhere else are these skills better demonstrated than in the decisions JMG graduates are making about their own careers and futures. According to the study, JMG graduates are relocating to communities with healthy job markets. They are also choosing to go into fields that are experiencing job growth, including retail trade and healthcare. The evidence is clear: JMG graduates are leaving places of limited opportunity and literally moving toward a better future.

Bank of America is a strong supporter of JMG. Betsey Greenstein, Bank of America's Maine Market President, says the results of this study are proof that JMG is a solid investment for Maine. "JMG works. The outstanding effectiveness of this program clearly justifies investment in JMG, and has proven itself to be an investment that will pay back to society many fold."

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, every year Maine has a pool of about 15,000 young people between the age of 18 and 24 (15% of this age group) who are defined as "disengaged". These young people are not working. They are not going to school. And therefore, they are not contributing to Maine's economy. JMG is committed to shrinking this population. Speaker of the House of the Maine Legislature, Glenn Cummings, says, "Any time we can ensure that a kid destined for that pool gets rescued and becomes a contributing force, we've done a good thing for Maine's economy."

Another point the study makes? It does not matter what kind of household the JMG students come from — whether it is single parent, low-income, or whether mom and dad have a high school diploma. Despite their childhood barriers, JMG students are succeeding. Nicholas C. Donohue, President and CEO of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation says, "This is why we support Jobs for Maine's Graduates. JMG's commitment to providing multiple pathways for success in higher education and careers for traditionally underserved students is reflected so clearly in the success of their students."



To recap, JMG graduates are:

- Earning higher wages
- Choosing promising careers
- Moving toward opportunity
- Staying in Maine

Maine does have some good news we can celebrate:

Every student JMG prepares for success means a stronger and more diverse workforce, increased productivity, an expanded tax base, and an overall healthier
Maine economy.

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