



EarthCare

The Leadership Challenge
for the 21st Century



2024 Evaluation Report

provided by 21st Century Leaders



"I would recommend this program to others because it provides valuable skills, networking opportunities, and a deeper understanding of both leadership and environmental stewardship."

- Mei Takuno, Northview HS, Class of 2025

About EarthCare: The Leadership Challenge

for the 21st Century



Founded in 1989, 21st Century Leaders (21CL) is a non-profit organization that connects, transforms, and inspires high school students in Georgia to leverage diversity, explore career opportunities, and become leaders in their school, community and ultimately the workforce.

EarthCare: The Leadership Challenge for the 21st Century, supported by Georgia Power, is one of 21CL's week-long summer leadership institutes. In its 17th year, EarthCare was held from June 9-14, 2024 for 95 high school students from across the state of Georgia. Students and staff spent the week on campus at Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville, GA.

Students at EarthCare explored various energy, sustainability and STEM topics as well as leadership challenges through speakers and panels, roundtable networking, workshops on diversity and inclusion and GiANT's 5 Voices, and communication exercises with Toastmasters, all with Georgia Power professionals and community leaders. They even got to visit the nation's largest nuclear power plant! **The support of Georgia Power provided this life-changing experience at no cost to the students.**



Statewide Student Diversity

95 Students

63 High Schools

33 Counties

56% Female identifying

43% Male identifying

1% Non-binary

33% African American

25% Caucasian

16% Indian/ South Asian

14% Asian

13% Hispanic/Latin American

"I would recommend this program to others because it provides a very welcoming environment with amazing people that encourage you to grow as a leader." - Niya Meadows, Woodland HS, Class of 2026

64% of students reported that attending EarthCare was their first time participating in a program focused on developing leadership skills

Student Impressions & Impact

"Leadership comes in many forms, it isn't just a cookie cutter description. In the 5 Voices presentation, everyone had different types of voices that they could relate to. While some of the voices weren't as recognized as leaders than the others, they all still have that potential to rise up to the challenge and lead."- *Ananya Augustine, Eagles Landing HS, Class of 2026*

IMPACT RESULTS

99% of students reported that EarthCare met or exceeded their expectations

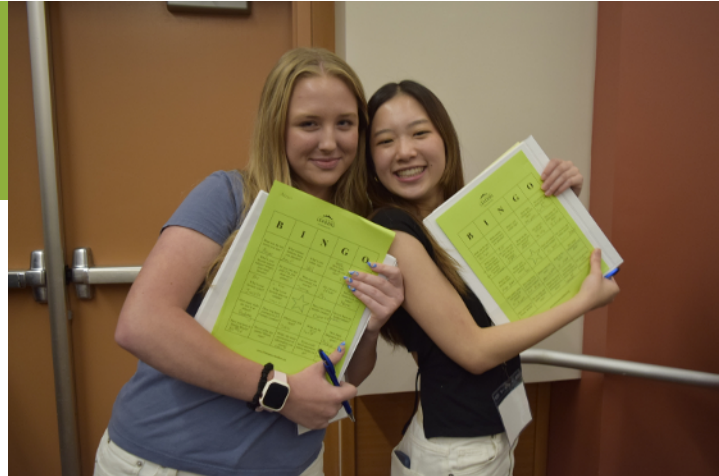
90% of students agree that their confidence as a leader grew this week

88% of the students reported that because of their experience they are more likely to seek out or continue seeking out leadership roles and that their Communication Skills improved

86% of students reported that their Networking Skills increased since attending EarthCare, **84%** of students shared that their Interpersonal Skills improved, and **79%** of students reported that their Teamwork Skills improved

32% of students reported this program was their first time visiting a college campus

19% of students reported that they were surprised at being selected to attend because they never really thought of themselves as a leader before attending



"Throughout this week, I learned that I truly do have the ability to publicly speak and even though it's scary, I can still do it pretty well." - *Gil McKinney, Arabia Mountain HS, Class of 2025*

Student Impact

21st Century Leaders' programs are focused on developing skills in seven core leadership competencies. Students reported understanding the following competencies and knowing how to use them or expand them, after attending EarthCare:

80%

Communicating Effectively

66%

Self Development

49%

Problem Solving
Building Effective Teams

47%

Career Ambition

45%

Integrity & Trust

43%

Action-Oriented

EarthCare Challenge: *presented by Georgia Power*

In addition to workshops, networking and site visits, students worked in teams to address a "challenge" and pitched their solution to a panel of judges to close out the week. The challenge this year, presented by Georgia Power, involved developing innovative solutions to pressing issues in the energy industry, with two specific challenges to choose from: 1) Energy Conservation and Efficiency, and 2) Customer Impact.



Students who attended EarthCare received free enrollment for the 2024-25 school year to **Leadership Connect**, our online leadership development platform, where they can further develop these competencies as well as participate in activities and experiences that help them grow as leaders.

Student Impressions & Impact

"Leadership isn't about having a higher role or position. It's about serving people around us." - Hank Yin, Mount Pisgah Christian School, Class of 2025

"I learned that a good leader has self-awareness and courage. They are willing to be behind others for the benefit of them." - Sophia Wang, Fulton Science Academy, Class of 2027

"I learned that not everyone's leadership style is the same and trials and tribulations make great leaders." - Niko Brown, Druid Hills HS, Class of 2026



"In EarthCare, the staff taught you how to be a leader, communicate efficiently in a team, how to network, and more about who you are as a person. Along with research a project and learning how to manage your time efficiently as a team and how to play to a person strengths. You learn more about your self and make connections that will last a lifetime." - Carissa Hagood, Richmond Hill HS, Class of 2027

CAREER AMBITION

89% of students reported that after attending the institute, they are clear in knowing their career path after high school

75% of students reported that EarthCare helped improve their Critical Thinking Skills and **73%** agreed their Business Knowledge increased

60% of students reported that their career interest was reaffirmed by an experience at the institute

45% of students reported that they discovered a new career field that they are now interested in that they didn't realize prior to attending

32% of students reported that an experience at EarthCare was their first time seeing someone successful who looks like them in a career or position they are interested in



INSPIRING YOUTH TO LEAD

73 Volunteers
over 128 volunteer hours

"**Deon Tucker** stood out to me because she opened my eyes to a potential career field and I could really relate to her." - Christabelle Adakosa, Westlake HS, Class of 2024

"I've learned that Georgia Power has a positive working environment. The company made a good impression on me. Their employees always had positive attitudes and comments over the company. It makes me feel inspired to consider it as a job opportunity." - Heymi Arguello-Espinoza, Baldwin HS, Class of 2025



"There are three professionals who made a positive impact on me: Thomas Goss, Pam Gattie, and Maria Flores Blackburn. Mr. Goss made the biggest impact on me because he was **vulnerable and gave honest answers. His start and career made me feel like I can accomplish whatever I want as long as I put in the work.**" - Leslie Perez Vasquez, Baldwin HS, Class of 2025

"**My takeaway from the leadership dinner is the true importance of small talk and how to quickly make a connection.**" -Carissa Hagood, Richmond Hill HS, Class of 2027

"**It takes some courage to start striking up a conversation, but making connection is worth while.**" - Alexandra Huynh, The Paideia School Class of 2027

"I learned that everybody had a beginning like me and nobody just started off great but **took opportunities** like me and rose to their level." - Morgan Scruggs, Benjamin E. Mays HS, Class of 2027

"**I learned how there are many challenges when trying to pursue a career or goal but there are people there to help you through it.**" - Crystal Zheng, GSMST, Class of 2026



Student Feedback

5 VOICES

"I learned that **I should work with all types** of the 5 voices to get a different perspective and opinions."
- Jocelyn Thomas, Clinch County HS, Class of 2026

"**I learned who I was at the core and understanding why.**" - Emma Wilson, John Hancock Academy, Class of 2026

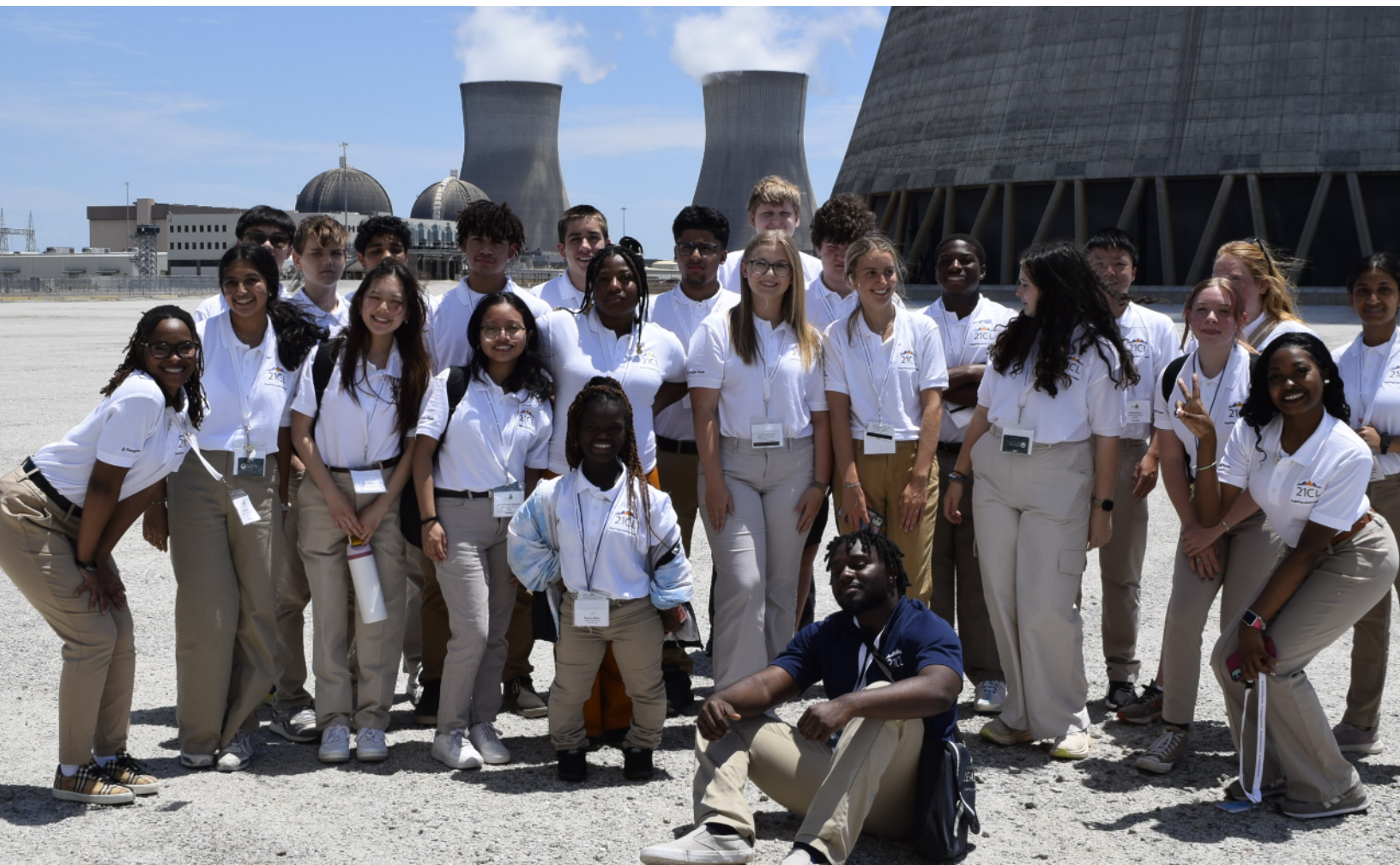
"I learned more about **being a nurturer and how it reflects** in a group setting. " - Isabella McGeehan, East Coweta HS, Class of 2026

PLANT VOGTLE

"I found our trip to Plant Vogtle to be a very interesting trip. **It really cleared up my misinterpretations about the plant.** One thing in particular is that the giant cylinders giving off steam wasn't the reactor, but the reactor's cooling system." - Grant Hannah, Innovation Academy, Class of 2026

"**I enjoyed the Plant Vogtle visit as it allowed me to communicate with my peers and I even learned more information about atoms, fission, fusion, and all sorts of topics related to nuclear energy.**" - Gil McKinney, Arabia Mountain High School, Class of 2025

"The **plant itself was very impressive**, especially the cooling towers up close. I also learned more about the 3 separate loops of water within a nuclear power plant." - Yaocen Shen, Walton HS, Class of 2025





EarthCare Service Project Impact!



300 → volunteer hours
= \$10,047 → economic impact in Milledgeville!

"I really liked that the service project helped me reconnect with nature and gain a clearer outlook on the ways in which I can help play a role in protecting our earth." - Niya Meadows, Woodland High School, Class of 2026

460
meals served

243
households given boxes of food



Oconee River Greenway Cleanup

250+
pounds of trash removed

Freedom Church + Cafe Central



Student Feedback

GEORGIA POWER MEET AND GREET

"I was able to talk with many professional people and **gained a deeper understanding** of the engineering background, as well as learning that many careers of engineering can go into the Georgia Power Company." - Mauricio Valdivia, Lanier HS, Class of 2026

"The meet and greet was very beneficial, I met and talked to a lot of very accomplished and distinguished people." - Aditya Arora, Peachtree Ridge HS, Class of 2026



LEADERSHIP DINNER & PANEL

"I loved learning about the professionals around us in a formal setting where we could practice professional interactions. I feel confident that I could talk to anyone." - Chasity Lykins, Dunwoody HS, Class of 2026

"I enjoyed speaking with the people at my table. **They gave me great and useful information.**" - Olivia Wilson, Turner County HS, Class of 2025

"I learned that success can mean many different things at different times." - Liam Cantrell, Rome HS, Class of 2027



Student Feedback

TOASTMASTERS WORKSHOP

"I was chosen to speak, and **it made me reflect on my public speaking skills** since I'm shy. It was also the best workshop because it was the most engaging. It made me want to join Toastmasters." - McKayla Davis, Sprayberry HS, Class of 2026

"I enjoyed the Toastmasters workshop because it gave me some insight about speaking in front of people. I felt that **it gave me a little more confidence with public speaking**, and it was very informative in general, and a lot of fun!" - Abigail Rock, Effingham County HS, Class of 2027

"I really enjoyed the Toastmasters' workshop because it showed me that **everyone can have a role in public speaking and how you can work together as a team.**" - Niya Meadows, Woodland HS, Class of 2026



"I enjoyed getting the opportunity to really open my eyes to how hard it is to talk about a certain topic without an outline or speech for a long period of time. Before the workshop I definitely believed that it wouldn't be hard, but the workshop really opened up my eyes. I enjoyed the Toastmasters' workshop so much that I definitely will look into finding a club in my community so I can work on my public speaking, script writing, and improving skills." - Alexandra Campos, The Walker School, Class of 2027

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

"In the Diversity and Inclusion Workshop, I learned that **being an inclusive leader means making sure everyone has a voice and feels comfortable in a situation.** It also means including people no matter what and not ignoring ideas because of their position" - Isabella Judd, Lanier HS, Class of 2027

"I learned the significance of creating inclusive environments and where diverse perspectives are valued, and how this can lead to more innovative and effective team outcomes." - Mei Takuno Northview HS, Class of 2025

"I learned that there are different types of safety: inclusion safety, learners safety, contributor safety, and challenger safety. I also learned about the importance of inclusion and how to achieve it." - Adora Chen, Oconee County HS, Class of 2025

"I learned what inclusion meant to others, and I saw how diverse everyone was not only in looks, but also in actions, words, and interactions." - Ananya Augustine, Eagles Landing High School, Class of 2026

"I learned the four stages of professional awareness, which was helpful for being a more inclusive leader." - Himangi Ghildyal, Innovation Academy, Class of 2025





AGENDA SNAPSHOT

Sun. June 9th - Fri. June 14, 2024

Georgia College & State University

SUNDAY: Welcome to EarthCare

Program welcome and leadership workshops led by 21CL staff and alumni

MONDAY: Leadership is Accepting the Challenge

EarthCare: The Leadership Challenge for the 21st Century - Cathy Cox, President, Georgia College & State University President; Patrick Harris, Regional Executive, Georgia Power

The EarthCare Challenge Presented by Georgia Power - Jennifer Winn, VP of Corporate Sustainability, GPC

GiANT Voices Workshop - Amy Hutchins, Founder & Principal, GRIT Leadership; GiANT Consultant (GPC, retired)

Meet & Greet - Toni Hannah, Area Manager, Georgia Power; Georgia Power employees

TUESDAY: Powering the Future

Taking Care of our Earth: Service Project- Oconee River Greenway, Freedom Church, and Cafe Central, and The Animal Shelter

Working with Other for Others - Hoss Brown, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Consultant, Georgia Power

College 101- 21st Century Leaders Alumni

WEDNESDAY: The Personal Side of Leadership

Speak Up! Toastmasters Group - Tony Fraley, Middle Ga Speaks, Toastmasters Club; Lisa Shinholster, VP of Education, Toastmasters Club

Social Justice: Unstoppable Leaders - Dr. Melissa Middlebrooks, Energy Efficiency Education Coordinator, Georgia Power; Valeda Thornton, Energy Efficiency Coordinator, Georgia Power

Sustainability Session - Jennifer Winn, VP of Corporate Sustainability, Georgia Power

Leadership Dinner + Panel - Maria Flores-Blackburn, Sr. Financial Analyst, Southern Power, 21CL Board of Directors, 21CL Alumna; Patrick Harris, Regional Executive, Georgia Power; Dr. Noris Price, Baldwin County School Superintendent; Lt. General William Caldwell, President, Georgia Military College

21CL Talent Show!

THURSDAY: Leadership is About Those Around You

Plant Vogtle Tours + Learning - Plant Vogtle

Finalize Projects



FRIDAY: Presentation Day

EarthCare Challenge Presentations - Derani Bandara, Team Leader, Plant Scherer Engineering; Greg Hudgins, Engineering Supervisor, GPC; Eric Draper, Transmission Analyst Metrology Lab, Georgia Power; Kevin Boakye-Danquah, Macon TMC Engineer, Georgia Power; Mark Paulish, Sr. Engineer Distribution Automation, Georgia Power; Bill Glisson, Education Supervisor, Education and Workforce Development, Georgia Power; Michael Hadden, Metering Service Supervisor, Georgia Power

Leadership Celebration - Rachel Williams, VP Transmission Field Operations, Georgia Power, 21CL Board of Directors