



# 2024 Evaluation Report

*provided by 21st Century Leaders*



**"My confidence, networking skills, communication skills, and leadership qualities all improved because of this program. The program has prepared me for the professional world."**

**- Brendan Fagan, Etowah HS, Class of 2025**

# About SYLI

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.

21CL's **Summer Youth Leadership Institute (SYLI)**, celebrating its 16th summer, is a week-long, business and entrepreneurship -oriented summer leadership institute hosted on Emory University's campus in partnership with the Goizueta Business School. This year's institute was held from June 2 - June 7, 2024.

Students at SYLI explored the different aspects of the business world through hands-on workshops with passionate professionals, networking opportunities and corporate insights.

Business professionals from Emory University's Goizueta Business School and Start:ME NextGen program, The Coca-Cola Company, Cox Enterprises & Cox Automotive, Insight Global, and many more helped the students develop personal and professional leadership skills and explore career possibilities throughout the week.

Students who attended SYLI received free enrollment for the 2024-25 school year to **Leadership Connect**, our online leadership development platform.

## Statewide Student Diversity



**80** Students

**49** High Schools

**18** Counties

**43%** Black/African American

**18%** Asian

**14%** Indian/South Asian

**13%** Caucasian

**6%** Hispanic

**5%** Multiracial

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**58%** Female identifying

**42%** Male identifying

*Thank you to the following individuals, corporate and community partners for supporting SYLI: Emory University Goizueta Business School, The Coca-Cola Company, Cox Enterprises, Insight Global, John & Mary Franklin Foundation, Kiwanis Foundation of Atlanta, DeKalb County Human Services Department, Fulton County Community Services and Youth Services Department, Scott Hudgens Family Foundation, Georgia Department of Education BOOST Grant, Inspire Brands Foundation, and Board of Directors and Individual Donors.*

**"I would recommend this program to others because it was very informative and it was truly a life changing experience!"**

**- Lewi Bayssa, Innovation Academy, Class of 2026**

# Student Impact & Impressions

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 as a result of the program

100%

Problem Solving,  
Action Oriented,  
Building Effective Teams  
Integrity/Trust  
Career Ambition

99%

Communicating Effectively

97%

Self-Development

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION



"I think diversity, equity and inclusion is sort of a hard topic that a lot of schools don't like to talk about and I think it was nice that we were able to talk about some of the bias, and some of the things that we may start to run into as we start working in jobs. **I really thought it was informative** and I liked learning about all the biases like affinity bias, stereotyping, etc." - Zara Tairu, Fulton Science Academy, Class of 2027

"**I learned that you can actually acknowledge your biases towards people and that there are different types of biases that are all different.**" - Kelly Baker, Peachtree Ridge, Class of 2026

"Something I learned was the definitions of the different unconscious biases. **Prior to the lesson I knew they existed but I didn't know what they were explicitly called or how they were defined.**" - Abigail Rong, Denmark High School Class of 2025

"**The DEI presentation and discussion was one of my favorite activities. It was an engaging conversation in which The Collective 180 presented topics in a fun, informational, and interactive way.**"

- Shiv Garg, Innovation Academy, Class of 2026

# Student Impact & Impressions



**23%** of students reported that attending the institute was their first time on a college campus

## **IMPACT RESULTS**

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**99%** of students agreed that they now see themselves as leaders after attending the program.

**97%** of students reported that their confidence as a leader increased because of the program.

**96%** of students reported that 21CL met or exceeded their expectations and 21CL helped improve their Communication Skills.

**92%** of students reported that 21CL helped improve their Business Knowledge, Networking and Interpersonal Skills.

**89%** of the students reported that because of their experience they are more likely to seek out or continue seeking out leadership roles.

**81%** of students reported that 21CL helped improve their Teamwork and Critical Thinking skills.

**"I had a speaking role and I realized that I was capable of doing it.** It was a bit overwhelming, but I did it!"

- Tessa Hayes, Jefferson County HS, Class of 2026

# Student Impressions & Impact

"After participating in 21st Century Leaders, I would describe it as a vital program to go through before figuring out a career path and where you may fit in the workplace. We work on soft skills necessary to succeed in the business world." - Marlenny Hernandez, North Spring Charter HS, Class of 2026

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

## *CAREER AMBITION*

**57%** of students reported that they **discovered a new career field** that they are now interested in that they didn't realize prior to attending the program

**43%** of students reported that their **career interest was reaffirmed** by an experience at the institute

**33%** of students reported their experience at the institute was their **first time visiting a corporate campus**

**20%** of students reported that an experience at the institute was their **first time seeing someone successful who looks like them** in a career or position they are interested in



# INSPIRING YOUTH TO LEAD

## 124 Volunteers, 232 hours

**47%** of students reported that this was their **first time participating** in a program focused on developing their leadership skills

## LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND NETWORKING

*Students had the chance to dine with industry professionals and community leaders during the Leadership Dinner + Panel and...*

**"I really learned a lot from the guests at our table, specifically from Mr. White. He talked a lot about his move from Toronto to Georgia and how it affected his life. It made me think a lot of what it means to be away for an extended period of time."** - Anshuman Khadanga, Lakeside High School (Evans), Class of 2025



*...and learned from 21CL Alumni through Roundtable Session...*

"My impressions from these leaders was that they all started somewhere and weren't sure where they were going to end up, but always were **optimistic about the future**. I found this to be very vulnerable and I am so happy they shared their stories as leaders." - Yasmin Rios, Swainsboro HS, Class of 2026

"I felt it was a good experience getting to hear from alumni and how the program has benefited them." - Jaela Parker, GSMST, Class of 2027

"I was very impressed with the qualifications that people had and **it made me proud of being in this organization/part of this institute.**" - Lailah Dodson, DECA, Class of 2027



# Social Enterprise & Entrepreneurship



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Students learned about entrepreneurship from Emory University's Goizueta Business School's Start:ME.

"I loved how the NextGen program gave me a **taste of true entrepreneurship.**" - Aadi Shah, Innovation Academy, Class of 2026

"I really enjoyed how the mentors helped us **refine our business ideas into something that is manageable and realistic**" - Carlos Jimenez, Putnam County High School, Class of 2026

"Oh I loved the opportunity to be creative. It was such a **great way to get me out of my comfort zone** and set the tone for the rest of the institute." - Kenneth Rice, Providence Christian Academy, Class of 2025



"I enjoyed working with a group to create our non profit. **I am now interested in actually making our idea a business**"

- Jani Corneh, Douglas County HS, Class of 2025

## LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

InsightGlobal

During the week, students worked in teams to address a "challenge" and pitch their solution to a panel of judges. The challenge this year, presented by **Insight Global**, involved developing creative communication and engagement strategies to improve company-wide communication, enhance employee engagement, and support talent retention and recruitment.





## Branded Day

The Coca-Cola Company sponsored its 11th year at SYLI with its branded day. The students enjoyed a career-driven day at the Coca-Cola Headquarters with Coca-Cola's Legal and Marketing departments, featuring a legal breakout session with a simulation of talent contract negotiations.



## 23 Volunteers

Top Sessions: Legal Breakout Session, Sprite Brand Marketing, and Coca-Cola History

"I loved learning about the in and outs of their legal system and the marketing behind **Spite and Coke.**" - Lewi Bayssa, Innovation Academy, Class of 2026

"My overall takeaway from the Coca Cola company was that networking is key and Sprite is more than just a drink, **they really enjoy working with the culture.**" - Destiny Cameron, Whitewater HS, Class of 2025

"I learned a lot about marketing and **it opened my eyes** to another way I can use my creative skills."- Kaelyn Gibson, Paideia, Class of 2026

"My overall takeaway from the Coca Cola visit is that big corporations can have **a variety of careers** so don't let your degree deter you from trying something new." - Jaela Parker, GSMST, Class of 2027

"**I was impressed with the diversity and inclusivity** of the employees and their unique backgrounds to bring them to where they are." - Akash Singh, Wheeler HS, Class of 2025

"**AP Chaney had very eye opening information and I never realized how much creativity can be present in places like marketing!**" - Lailah Dodson, DECA, Class of 2027

"I couldn't pick a favorite session as I had fun and was engaged all throughout the Coca-Cola experience. It was very informative as legal professionals from the company came and talked to us about their respective positions in the Coca Cola Company. They explained what their jobs entailed and the responsibilities that came with it." - Vidhi Raiyani, Putnam County HS, Class of 2026





# Cox Automotive at Manheim

## 42 Volunteers

# COX



*Students got hands-on experience learning about the automotive industry, from building robots to inspecting and valuing cars for auction.*

"While all three sessions were my favorite, I really liked the panel and robot sessions. **I liked the panel session because it allowed me to network with professionals doing the type of work I aspire to do in the future.** I also really liked the robot session because I hadn't built a robot in such a long time and it was very rewarding when I was finished building it." - Vidhi Raiyani, Putnam County High School, Class of 2026

"**I loved listening to different people** and hearing their experiences throughout their lives that got them to where they are today." - Caitlyn Brown, The Lovett School, Class of 2025

"All of the sessions were my favorite because **all of them were really useful as well as fun** since it was all very interactive and interesting." Julia Munoz-Paisano, Campbell HS, Class of 2025



### **How was your corporate tour experience with Cox Automotive at Manheim?**

"**Amazing!! It was so interactive** and I realized how worldwide Cox was and how nice the staff are."- Chase Hopkins, Midtown HS, Class of 2025

"The corporate tour experience was so great, I love seeing the different cars and **speaking to someone that resonated with me.**" - Sydney Lee, Cobb Horizon, Class of 2026

"**I definitely liked the different stations, I learned something unique in all of them.** I am not a car person myself, so it was interesting to see all the different careers that could be associated with the company other than selling." - Ioanna Antonakaki, Northview High School, Class of 2025

"The corporate tour experience was very insightful. **I now understand the nature of the automotive business.**"- Sheona Diwakar, Campbell High School, Class of 2025

## **SUNDAY: Welcome to Summer Youth Leadership Institute (SYLI)**

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

## **MONDAY: Entrepreneurship**

**Welcome to Start:ME NextGen** - Fran Carroll, Community Program Southside Coordinator, Start:ME; Will Wesley, Community Development Representative, Delta Community Credit Union

### **Entrepreneurship 101: Idea Generation Session**

**Business Plan Labs: From Ideation to Generation** - Start:ME NextGen Mentors

**Dolphin Tank Pitches!** - Students present their business plan

**The SYLI Challenge, Presented by Insight Global** - Hannah Jenkins, Philanthropy Program Manager, Insight Global  
Patrick Glynn – Senior Content Marketing Manager, Insight Global;

### **21CL Alumni Roundtables**

## **TUESDAY: The Coca-Cola Company Day**

**Coca-Cola Day Welcome + History** - Kate Hewitt, Executive Director, 21st Century Leaders  
Ron Engineer, Director, Legal Counsel, Head of Global Compliance

**Coca-Cola Connections** - Ashley Lee, VP, Executive Counsel & Head of Legal Operations

**Brand Marketing: Sprite** - A.P. Chaney, Creative Director, Sparkling Flavors

**Coca-Cola x Marvel: The Heroes:** Chase Abraham, Senior Director, Shopper & Consumer Content

**Legal Matters! + Breakouts & Presentations** - Andy Weeks, Shaudie Fassih (21CL Alumna), and Robert Barnes

**Breakout Session Debrief** - Tony Fan & Robert Barnes

**Influencer Marketing + Social Media** - Marshall Roach, Senior Director, Social Center

**Final Thoughts** - Anjuli Kelotra, Chief Ethics & Compliance Officer & Associate General Counsel

**Pool Party + All Camp Fun!**

## **WEDNESDAY: Leadership, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**

**Leading in a Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive Culture** - Patrick Solomon (21CL Advisory Council) & Joe Iarocci, Co-Founders, The Collective 180

### **Breakout Discussions/Activities**

**Dinner Etiquette-Professionalism Matters!** - 21CL SLT

**Leadership Dinner + Dinner Panelists** - Board Welcome: Arjun Chowdri, SVP, Membership & Retention, Hagerty, 21CL Board of Directors  
Panelists: Chi Nguyen, CFO, Insight Global, 21CL Board of Directors

Brian Goebel, Managing Director, Business & Society Institute, Goizueta Business School, Emory University

Noelle Jones, CEO + Founder, We Thrive Media, 21CL Alumna

Amber Thompson, Dealer Performance Manager, GWC Warranty

**21CL Talent Show!**

## **THURSDAY: COX Enterprises & COX Automotive Day**

**Welcome and Overview of Manheim** - Michael White, Assistant Vice President, Human Resources  
Business Partner, Cox Enterprises, 21CL Board of Directors

Jamie Gardenour, Assistant General Manager, Manheim Atlanta

Eddie Rawlings, Assistant General Manager, Manheim Atlanta

**Tour, car description, and market valuation activity**

**Robot Building** - Manheim volunteers

**Early career fireside chat** - featuring Momentum

**Auction simulation and Debrief**

**Finalize projects + Snack Social break!**

## **FRIDAY: SYLI Challenge Presentations presented by Insight Global**

**Intro to Judges + Presentation-** Hannah Jenkins, Philanthropy Program Manager, Insight Global

Korryn Williamson, Director of DEIB, Insight Global; Bria Villasante – DEIB Strategist, Insight Global; Patrick Glynn – Senior Content Marketing Manager, Insight Global; Nell Goza – Communications Business Partner, Insight Global

**Leadership Closing Celebration** - 21CL students, staff and parents/family



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