



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

21st Century Leaders Announces Winners for 2025 Georgia Youth Leadership Awards

21 Georgia High School Students to Be Honored at Signature Be the Inspiration Gala

(February 5, 2025) Atlanta, GA – 21st Century Leaders, Georgia’s premier youth leadership and workforce readiness program for high school students from diverse backgrounds across the state, announces the top 21 youth leaders selected for its annual Georgia Youth Leadership Awards (GYLA). The honorees will be recognized at the nonprofit's annual fundraising event, the [Be the Inspiration Gala](#), presented by Warner Bros. Discovery, to be held on Saturday, March 15, 2025 at Zoo Atlanta in Atlanta, Ga.

21st Century Leaders (21CL), in partnership with the event’s corporate sponsors and partners, brings together business and civic leaders to raise support for 21st Century Leaders' year-round leadership programs while also recognizing 21 of their own outstanding high school students throughout Georgia who have made a significant impact on their schools, communities and beyond.

21CL serves over 2,500 students annually and this year’s 21 awardees – all in high school and all members of 21st Century Leaders – include nonprofit founders, entrepreneurs, content creators, advocates, and volunteers who truly represent the diversity of Georgia with students from DeKalb to Muscogee to Richmond counties. The honorees exhibit 21CL’s leadership values of being resilient, service-oriented, forward-thinking, resourceful, and inclusive. The 21 awardees were carefully chosen by a 27-member selection committee of business professionals, 21CL Board of Directors, 21CL corporate volunteers and community leaders, and 21CL alumni and student peers. The full selection committee is listed below and on 21CL’s website.

21st Century Leaders is proud to announce the following 21 outstanding youth leaders for its 2025 Georgia Youth Leadership Awards:

1. **Moatapari Agbere**, Chattahoochee County High School, from Muscogee County
2. **Ashley Nelson**, Chamblee Charter High School, from DeKalb County
3. **Michelle Wang**, Fulton Science Academy, from Fulton County
4. **Pranav Yellapragada**, Chattahoochee High School, from Fulton County
5. **Wendell Rogers**, Dunwoody High School, from DeKalb County
6. **Sreepadha Daram**, Innovation Academy, from Fulton County
7. **Hadil Adam**, Clarkston High School, from DeKalb County

8. **Ibraheem Hassan**, Lakeside High School (Evans), from Columbia County
9. **Tessa Hayes**, Jefferson County High School, from Jefferson County
10. **Daniella Taiwo**, Lovejoy High School, from Fayette County
11. **Christopher Boyd**, Landmark Christian School, from Clayton County
12. **Kenia Gonzalez-Chavez**, Cedar Shoals High School, from Athens-Clarke County
13. **Laurin McCoy**, Davidson Fine Arts Magnet School, from Richmond County
14. **Ca'Leia Nelson**, Milton High School, from Gwinnett County
15. **Jace Williams**, Westlake High School, from Fulton County
16. **Ethan Barlay**, Rockdale Magnet School, from Rockdale County
17. **Sheona Diwakar**, Campbell High School (Smyrna), from Cobb County
18. **Micah Newton**, Pickens County High School, from Pickens County
19. **Yasmin Rios**, Swainsboro High School, from Emanuel County
20. **Sauyer Stewart**, Arabia Mountain High School, from DeKalb County
21. **Ronak Vyas**, Alpharetta High School, from Fulton County

Through corporate sponsors' support, each youth leader will be presented with a \$500 grant at the Be the Inspiration Gala, with one student awarded the *Warner Bros. Discovery Student Leadership Award*, the event's top award which includes a \$1,000 grant from the presenting sponsor, Warner Bros. Discovery. Students are also paired with coaches who mentor the students throughout the event season. Our Georgia Youth Leadership Award Coaches are recognized and accomplished community leaders and/or members of Atlanta Business Chronicle's 40 Under 40 alumni, maintaining a partnership established with the group in 2008 when 21st Century Leaders first launched this event. The student winners and coaches met at a private Meet + Greet luncheon on Saturday, February 1, 2025 at Emory's Goizueta Business School, a sponsor and supporter.

This year's Be the Inspiration Gala is being led by Co-Chairs and 21CL Board of Directors members Mari Sifo of Host Hotels and Resorts and Chi Nguyen of Insight Global. For more information about the Be the Inspiration Gala [or to purchase a ticket to the event](https://www.21stcenturyleaders.org), please visit www.21stcenturyleaders.org. All proceeds from the event will support 21CL's ongoing efforts to provide youth leadership and talent development programs for high school students across Georgia at little to no cost to students.

Georgia Youth Leadership Awards Coaches:

The Georgia Youth Leadership Award coaches for the 2025 student winners are Maranie Brown, BlackRock, 21CL Board of Directors*; Greg Clay, City of Atlanta, Mayor's Office, 21CL Alumni*; Whitney Deal Marshall, Whitney Marshall Coaching*; Naceo Denney, Georgia Power*; Chandra Farley, City of Atlanta, Mayor's Office of Sustainability & Resilience*; David Felfoldi, SHERPA Global*; Marty Fleischmann, The Masters Team*; Tania Garcia, Senior Marketing Executive,

21CL Board of Directors; Brian Goebel, Goizueta Business School, Business & Society Institute, 21CL Board of Directors*; Taylor Green, Amazon Web Services, 21CL Alumni*; Poojan Karnik, Wellstar Kennestone Regional Medical Center; Ashley Lee, The Coca-Cola Company*; DJ Lewis, Technology Consulting Executive; Lanita Lucas, Aflac*; Dr. Brandon Morgan, Iconic Orthodontics, 21CL Alumni*; Taunia Nkromo-Stevenson, Warner Bros. Discovery*; Michael Quigley, OVH Media*; Martha Revelo, DeKalb County; Ed Roche, Cox Enterprises; Assi Van Bastelaar, Spotfire

Georgia Youth Leadership Awards Selection Committee

All nominations were reviewed by our 27-member GYLA Selection Committee, comprised of 21CL corporate volunteers, 21CL Board of Directors, and 21CL alumni and student peers. Committee members included the coaches indicated above, along with Curtis Bennett, MarketSource; Erik Bryant, Truist Wealth, 21CL Board of Directors; Neha Chaparala, Mercer, 21CL Alumni Board; Susannah Darrow, Purpose Possible; Dr. Shaneeta Johnson, Morehouse School of Medicine; Jeff Kupor, Invesco, 21CL Board of Directors; Clarke LeGrande, Wellstar; Jason Wallace, Capital Group, 21CL Board of Directors; Thurman Williams, Community Volunteer, Coca-Cola (retired); Anqi Zou, Truist, 21CL Board of Directors; and Hannah Lang, 21CL Youth Ambassador and 2024 GYLA Student Recipient.

About 21st Century Leaders

Since 1989, 21st Century Leaders has served more than 20,000 diverse high school students from 95% of Georgia's counties. 21st Century Leaders' mission is to connect, transform, and inspire high school students from diverse backgrounds across the state of Georgia to leverage diversity, explore career opportunities, and become leaders in their school, community, and ultimately the workforce.

21st Century Leaders is currently accepting student applications (until March 1st) into their leadership and development program and for their [summer leadership institutes for the 2025 summer](#). The summer leadership institutes are residential one-week programs hosted on a college campus with our corporate partners and business professionals. 21CL accepts rising sophomores, juniors and seniors for the institutes. High school students of any grade can enroll in [Leadership Connect](#), 21CL's online learning platform, at any time and join the organization. For more information about 21st Century Leaders, visit www.21stcenturyleaders.org.

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