

21st Century Leaders honors 20 Under 20



SPECIAL

Making future leaders: 21st Century Leaders, which offers three-year leadership development programs to rising high school students, is expanding.

21st Century Leaders, a nonprofit high school leadership training program in Decatur, Ga., revealed this year's Georgia 20 Under 20 group Sept. 24 during an event at The Foundry at Puritan Mills in Atlanta.

Selected by the Atlanta Business Chronicle's 40 Under 40 alumni, the awardees were honored for being outstanding role models for other youth, for demonstrating leadership, for serving as a positive example to other youth, and for initiating endeavor(s) or accomplishment(s) overall.

21st Century Leaders is a nonprofit that collaborates with business and education leaders to develop, inspire and nurture students with leadership potential to make a positive impact.

"This year's winners are accomplished and rising youth leaders," said Bob Watson, executive director 21st Century Leaders. "Each has their own incredible story."

21st Century Leaders began administering three-year leadership development programs to rising high school students 18 years ago.

Since that time, more than 4,200 have participated in 21st Century Leaders. Of this group, nearly all move on to attend college and the majority report taking on formal leadership roles in their colleges/universities and communities.

The 40 Under 40 who presented the awards were: Kate Atwood, **Kate's Club**; Kali Beyah, **Kilpatrick Stockton LLP**; Simon Bloom, **Bloom Law Firm LLC**; Johnny Dixon, **Atlanta City Council** candidate; Justin Honaman, **Coca-Cola Customer Business Solutions**; Monique Dearth Honaman, **ISHR Group**; Adriane Randolph, **Kennesaw State University**; Kevin Sessions, **TalentQuest** and Brent Sobol, **TORO Properties Group**.

20 Under 20 Class of 2009

21st Century Leaders

Michael Asmelash, a graduate of Tucker High School, is a freshman at The University of Georgia. He is president of his student company, JUMP.

Veronica Coates is a senior at Booker T. Washington High School in Atlanta. Coates volunteers to improve the lives of girls.

Brian Duffy is a sophomore at Lambert High School in Cumming. Duffy founded the Run for Life 5K to benefit the Emory ALS Center.

Alyssa Joy Eidbo, a graduate of Westminster, is a freshman at Auburn University. Eidbo owns and operates EidboStudio, a company that makes show-quality miniature tack for model horses.

Ryan Ernstes is a junior at The Walker School in Marietta. She founded and organized a charity race called the Hot Lips Hustle 5K to help children who, like herself, were born with a cleft lip or palate.

Marquita Gaines is a senior at Marietta High School in Marietta. Gaines is a founding member of the FACE Foundation, Inc., a nonprofit that assists families in the sickle cell community.

Ivy Gann is a senior at Eastside High School in Covington. Gann started a nonprofit organization named "One Dollar, One Can, One Day," with the goal of replenishing local food banks.

Cortez Harris is a senior at McNair High School in Atlanta. Cortez is the founder of Christ Restoring Youth Ministries in DeKalb County and volunteers extensively at the DeKalb County Board of Health.

Cristina Jennings is a junior at North Atlanta High School in Atlanta. She is the founder of Tweens Fighting Hunger, an organization that helps churches and local food pantries keep food on their shelves.

Leo Jia is a junior at Roswell High School in Roswell. Jia was awarded "Counselor in Training of the Year" at the Wills Park Summer Camp in 2008

and received the Presidential Call to Service award the same year.

Michelle Lee is a junior at Joseph Wheeler High School in Marietta. During the summer, Lee taught English and computer skills at a local refugee center. She is co-founder of her school's Helping Hands Club.

Miranda Lynch is a sophomore at Ben Franklin Academy in Atlanta. After visiting South Africa in 2008, 13-year-old Lynch founded a nonprofit, Isipho, aimed at helping people in a remote Zulu village.

Megan and Morgan McCall are freshman at Arabia Mountain High School in Lithonia. Twin sisters Megan and Morgan, age 14, joined with their younger sister Madison to form a singing group, a fashion line and a charity.

Nicholas Middlebrooks is a junior at North Atlanta High School. He is a founding member of Achieving Higher Levels, a student-run T-shirt company.

Lisa Paige is a senior at Booker T. Washington High School in Atlanta. She has made an indelible mark as the Fulton County Youth Commission District Leader for District 5.

Anna Taylor is a senior at Holy Innocents Episcopal School in Atlanta. She is dedicated to helping the people of Haiti with disaster recovery efforts and reducing Iodine Deficiency Disease.

Tiffany Vernon is a senior at Grady High School in Atlanta. She launched the school's first-ever sign language club.

Ana Vianei is a sophomore at Marietta High School. She is founder of For the Love of Africa, which from concept to execution raised \$4,500 to build a well in Burkina Faso, Africa.

Melody Yin is a senior at Northview High School in Duluth. Yin is co-founder of Take a Swing Inc., a nonprofit that teaches tennis to disadvantaged children from economically challenged communities.