



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **21<sup>st</sup> Century Leaders Announces Winners for 2024 Georgia Youth Leadership Awards**

21 Inspiring Georgia High School Students to Be Recognized at Be the Inspiration Gala

(February 15, 2024) Atlanta, GA – 21st Century Leaders, a Georgia-based nonprofit 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 newly renamed [Be the Inspiration Gala](#), presented by Warner Bros. Discovery, to be held on Saturday, March 23, 2024 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 outstanding high school students throughout Georgia who have made a significant impact on their schools, communities and beyond. The 2024 event also marks the special occasion of 21CL's 35th Anniversary and shared community impact since 1989.

21CL serves over 1,700 students annually and this year's 21 awardees – all in high school and all members of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leaders – include nonprofit founders, entrepreneurs, content creators, advocates, and volunteers who truly represent the diversity of Georgia with students from DeKalb to Emanuel to Columbia counties. The nominated students exhibit 21CL's leadership qualities of being service-oriented, forward-thinking, resourceful, passionate and inclusive. The 21 awardees were carefully chosen by a 22-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 the 2024 Georgia Youth Leadership Awards:

1. **Jordan Adeyemi**, Phillips Exeter Academy, Gwinnett County
2. **Aditi Ashok**, South Forsyth High School, Forsyth County
3. **Prateek Doddla**, Chattahoochee High School, Fulton County
4. **Shiv Garg**, Innovation Academy, Fulton County
5. **Joshua Girgis**, Montessori School of Rome, Floyd County

6. **Melanie Harper**, Marist School, Fulton County
7. **Christian Hooks**, Grayson High School, Gwinnett County
8. **Humza Iqbal**, Parkview High School, Gwinnett County
9. **Diana Jachman**, Midtown High School, Fulton County
10. **Hannah-Lisa Jones**, Johnson Ferry Christian Academy, Fulton County
11. **Anshuman Khadanga**, Lakeside High School (Evans), Columbia County
12. **Hannah Lang**, Georgia Cyber Academy, Walton County
13. **Akanksha Manna**, Campbell High School, Cobb County
14. **Maya Matthews**, Westlake High School, Fulton County
15. **Olaoluwa Oguneye**, Decatur High School, DeKalb County
16. **Abigail Rong**, Denmark High School, Forsyth County
17. **Dhahami Salgado**, Emanuel County Institute, Emanuel County
18. **Rhea Shah**, Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science & Technology, Gwinnett County
19. **Ishita Sukul**, Johns Creek High School, Fulton County
20. **Zarina Wang**, Lambert High School, Forsyth County
21. **Ivy Yang**, Alpharetta High School, 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 10, 2024 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](#), please visit [www.21stcenturyleaders.org](http://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 2024 student winners are Sam Aguilar, Atlanta Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America\*; Monique Bell, Bobby Dodd Institute\*; Maranie Brown, BlackRock, 21CL Board of Directors\*; Greg Clay, City of Atlanta, 21CL Alumnus\*; Whitney Deal Marshall, Whitney Marshall Coaching\*; Alex Ebanks, Essence; Chandra Farley, City of Atlanta, Mayor's Office of Sustainability and Resilience\*; David Felfoldi, SHERPA Global\*; Marty Fleischmann, All Electric Racing Organization (AERO), 21CL Board of Directors\*; TreVorski Garrett, Cox; Taylor Green, IBM, 21CL Alumni Board; JP James, Libreum International, 21CL Board of Directors; Kelly Lee, Atlanta DREAM\*; Clarke LeGrande, Cobb Medical Center

(Wellstar); Brandon Morgan, Iconic Orthodontics, 21CL Alumnus\*; Christian Murphy, Wellspring Living\*; Michael Quigley, QVH Media\*; Taunia Nkromo-Stevenson, Warner Bros. Discovery; Angela Williams, AMBSE\*; Thurman Williams, Community Volunteer, Coca-Cola Alumni\*; Anqi Zou, Truist, 21CL Board of Directors\*

*\*Coaches who also served on the Selection Committee*

### **Georgia Youth Leadership Awards Selection Committee**

All nominations were reviewed by our 22-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 Arjun Chowdri, Hagerty, 21CL Board of Directors; Cam Henson, Citibank, 21CL Alumni Board; Asher Jones, MarketSource, 21CL Alumni Board; Felicia McDade, Engie; Patrick Solomon, The Collective 180, 21CL Advisory Council; Kristopher Williams, Warner Bros. Discovery; and Raveena Ali, 21CL member, Youth Ambassador and 2023 GYLA Student Recipient.

### **About 21st Century Leaders**

*Since 1989, 21st Century Leaders has served more than 17,000 diverse high school students from over 250 Georgia high schools. 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 celebrating 35 years of inspiring youth to lead in 2024, with an updated website, a refreshed annual fundraising gala, and content throughout the year highlighting success stories of 35 alumni from the past 3.5 decades along with 21CL's leadership values and competencies and ongoing impact.*

*21st Century Leaders is currently accepting student applications (until March 1<sup>st</sup>) into their leadership and development program and for their [summer leadership institutes for the 2024 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 more information about 21st Century Leaders, visit [www.21stcenturyleaders.org](http://www.21stcenturyleaders.org).*

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