



Inspiring youth to lead.



EarthCare

The Leadership Challenge
for the 21st Century



2025 Evaluation Report

provided by 21st Century Leaders



"It's a life memory and experience that no one will forget. From making connections to learning and interacting from professionals and even going to the biggest power plant in the country, it taught me so much that schools wouldn't have touched. I learned lessons that will lead me into a better future and that I will take on skills that I will use forever."

-Tiffany Nguyen, Peachtree Ridge High School, Class of 2028

www.21stcenturyleaders.org

EARTHCARE: The Leadership Challenge of the 21st Century

supported by:



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.

Georgia Power has been partnering with 21CL since its founding in 1989, investing in the next generation of leaders. 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 8 - June 13, 2025 for over 80 high school students on the campus of Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville, GA. Students explored various sustainability and STEM topics as well as leadership challenges through speakers and panels, roundtable networking, workshops on inclusion and communicating effectively all with Georgia Power professionals and community leaders. They even got to visit the nation's largest nuclear power plant, Plant Vogtle!

The support of Georgia Power provided this life-changing experience at no cost to the students.



Statewide Student Diversity

82 Students

66 High Schools

29 Counties

44% Female Identifying

56% Male Identifying

32% Black/African-American

20% Caucasian

13% Asian

11% Indian/South Asian

7% Hispanic/ Latino

17% Bi/Multi Racial

"Leadership is not about being the boss of the group. Instead, it is about actively engaging in a group and positively influencing others to reach a common goal."

**-London Eldridge, Baldwin High School,
Class of 2028**

97% of students reported that after attending EarthCare they now see themselves as a leader.

Student Impressions & Impact



"You don't have to always be the one in front to be a leader. You can make your own contributions in your own way and still be your own leader and help other people."

-Collins Crow, Chamblee High School, Class of 2027

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

91% of students reported that their **confidence as a leader increased** during EarthCare.

91% of students reported that their **Networking Skills improved** since attending EarthCare, while **90%** of students reported their **Communication Skills improved**.

87% of students are **more likely to seek out a leadership role** or will continue seeking leadership roles.

81% of students reported their **Interpersonal Skills improved** since attending the program, while **80%** reported this program **improved their Teamwork Skills**.

"I learned that everyone has different leadership styles and we all have different ways for leading a team and we can work together to accomplish the team's goals."

-Haleima Harris, Dekalb Early College Academy, Class of 2027



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:

85%

**PROBLEM
SOLVING**

82%

**COMMUNICATING
EFFECTIVELY**

77%

**SELF-DEVELOPMENT;
CAREER AMBITION**

76%

**INTEGRITY
& TRUST**

70%

**BUILDING
EFFECTIVE TEAMS**

67%

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 challenges to choose from: 1) Energy Conversation and Efficiency, and 2) Customer Impact.

“I really learned and was able to grow as leader from the challenge group experience.” -Kristy Pham, Valdosta City High School, Class of 2028

“I have the ability to be a leader and work with others who might have different mindsets from me.” -Nathalia Figueroa, Lanier High School, Class of 2026

Student Exposure



"I learned that I can do anything I put my mind to, and even if I decided to major in another field not associated with EarthCare, I still have learned so many things that I plan on taking with me in my future. I learned that I really enjoy community service when we went to the lake and cleaned up trash. It felt really good to help clean the environment."

-Dylan Jefferson, The Walker School, Class of 2026

CAREER READINESS

91% of students reported being **clear in knowing their career path after high school** after attending the institute

86% of students reported their **Business Knowledge increased** since attending.

78% of students' reported their **career interest was reaffirmed** through the program

34% of students **discovered a new career field** that they are now interested in that they didn't realize prior to attending



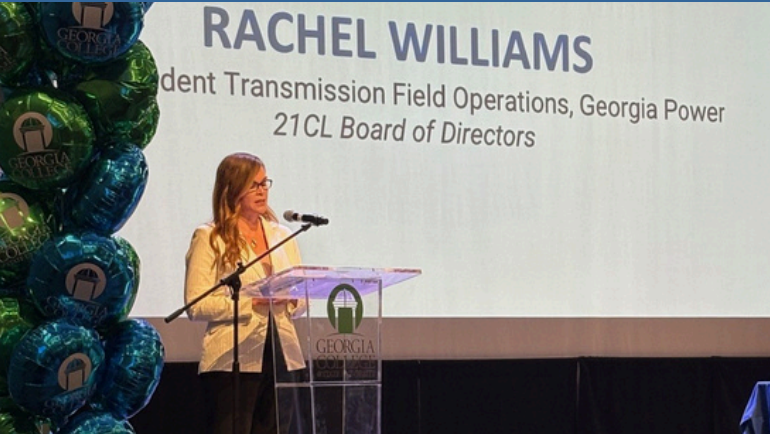
"One thing I have learned about Georgia Power is that there is an incredibly diverse range of positions at the company. There are engineers, environmental specialists, community representatives, and many more. My experience with Georgia Power professionals made me realize that the utility company roles were much more complicated than I had initially thought."

-Raina Banerjee, Wheeler High School, Class of 2028



INSPIRING YOUTH TO LEAD

81 Volunteers | 141 Volunteer Hours



RACHEL WILLIAMS

Assistant Transmission Field Operations, Georgia Power
21CL Board of Directors

"I had an amazing time and got the chance to network with professionals that I admire and want to follow in their footsteps." - Corban Addison, Pickens County High School, Class of 2028

"Dr. Melissa Middlebrooks really inspired me. It was nice to see someone so smart, yet so approachable. It was also refreshing to see someone who looks like me in a position of power for something academic."

-Corbin Garner, New Manchester High School, Class of 2028



MEET AND GREET WITH

"I met three amazing business professionals who helped me discover new career opportunities, assured me I was on the right track in my education, and showed me how each of them learned and adapted to adult life."

-Ana Rowe, The Galloway School, Class of 2027



38%

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



"The meet and greet helped me come out my comfort zone and learn how to ask the right questions."

-London Robinson, Utopian Academy, Class of 2026

Leadership Dinner + Networking



71%

of students reported it was their **first time** formally dining with business professionals.



"I learned more about dinner etiquette and how to approach talking to business professionals. I talked with the deputy superintendent and he gave me insight on his job experience and that it's never too late to switch careers."

-Sophia Moore, Valdosta High School, Class of 2028

"My overall take away from the dinner was that some of these professionals you see are just like you and they aren't hard to talk to. " - Chidike Eke-Okoro, Southwest Atlanta Christian Academy Class of 2027



Student Session Feedback

LEADERSHIP STYLE + UNSTOPPABLE LEADERS

"I learned about different types of thinkers, and how those differences must be highlighted and accounted for in group work. This made me think about how I must consider how other people's minds work differently than mine." - Paula Arciniegas, Blessed Trinity High School, Class of 2028



58%

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

"I learned about my teamwork style and how I work with others. It showed me how similar other people in my group are and how they process information given to them. Not only that, I learned other types of working styles or thinking styles of others and how to work with other people that have different thinking styles." -Tiffany Nguyen, Peachtree Ridge High School, Class of 2028

"It was a enjoyable experience that showed me the importance of communicating with my teammates."

-Denise Echols, Grovetown High School, Class of 2027



"A professional that made an impact on me is Mr. Waldrep. He taught us the different types of leaders and that everyone learns differently; this taught me that I only have to more deeply understand people."

-Phillip Savage, Columbia High School, Class of 2028



TOASTMASTERS WORKSHOP

"I learned that I am a better public speaker than I thought I was."

- Jovie Ruf, Whitewater High School,
Class of 2026

52%

of students reported
that it was their first
time giving or
creating an elevator
speech.



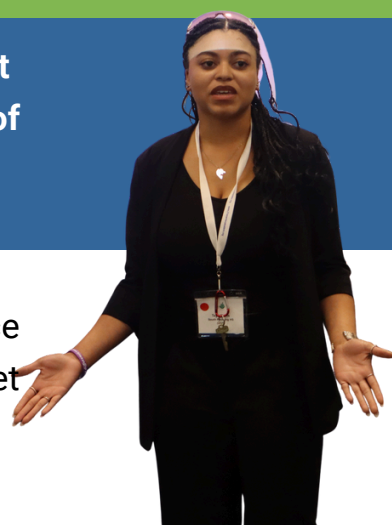
"Absolutely love Toastmasters it pushed me out of my comfort zone to become an even better public speaker. I was given a minute to come up with a two minute impromptu speech and I really feel like I did really well. It helped me learn that I am pretty good at public speaking and that's something that I can pour more into because it's a talent and even though it could be learned, I feel like I'm talented in that realm."

-Kimora Davis, Jonesboro High School, Class of 2026



"I enjoyed it because it forced me to step out of my comfort zone and speak on the spot."

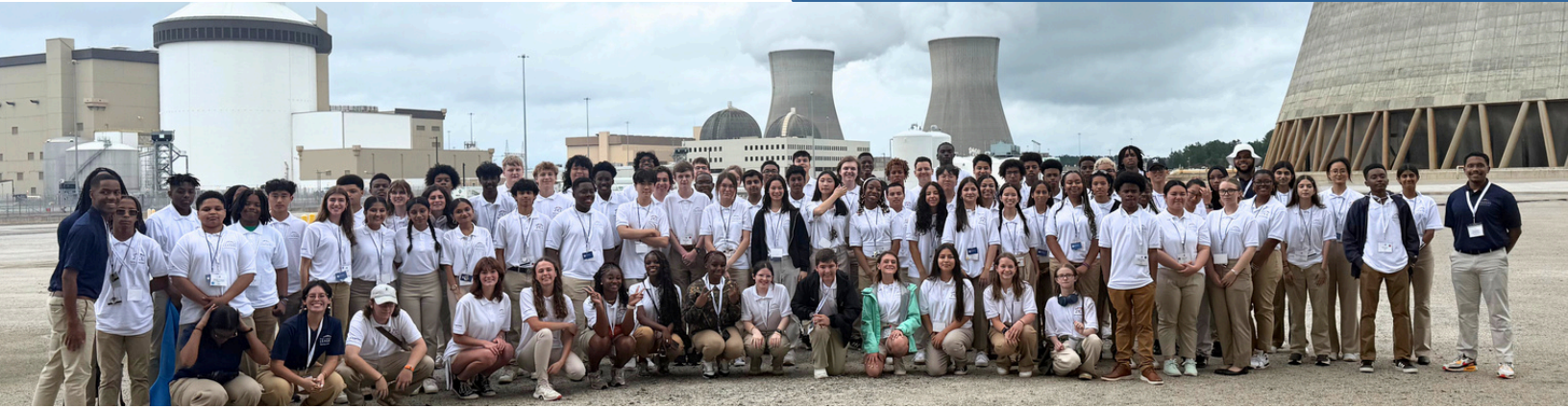
Jayden Hubbard, A. R
Johnson Health Science
and Engineering Magnet
School, Class of 2028



WORKING WITH OTHERS FOR OTHERS

"This inclusion workshop introduced me to the importance of diversity, something I wasn't quite familiar with at first. Ms. Sara also gave some insight of the importance of psychological safety and how necessary it is for a leader to help create that environment where everyone feels like they can express their ideals."-Desmond Rose, Elite Scholars Academy, Class of 2027



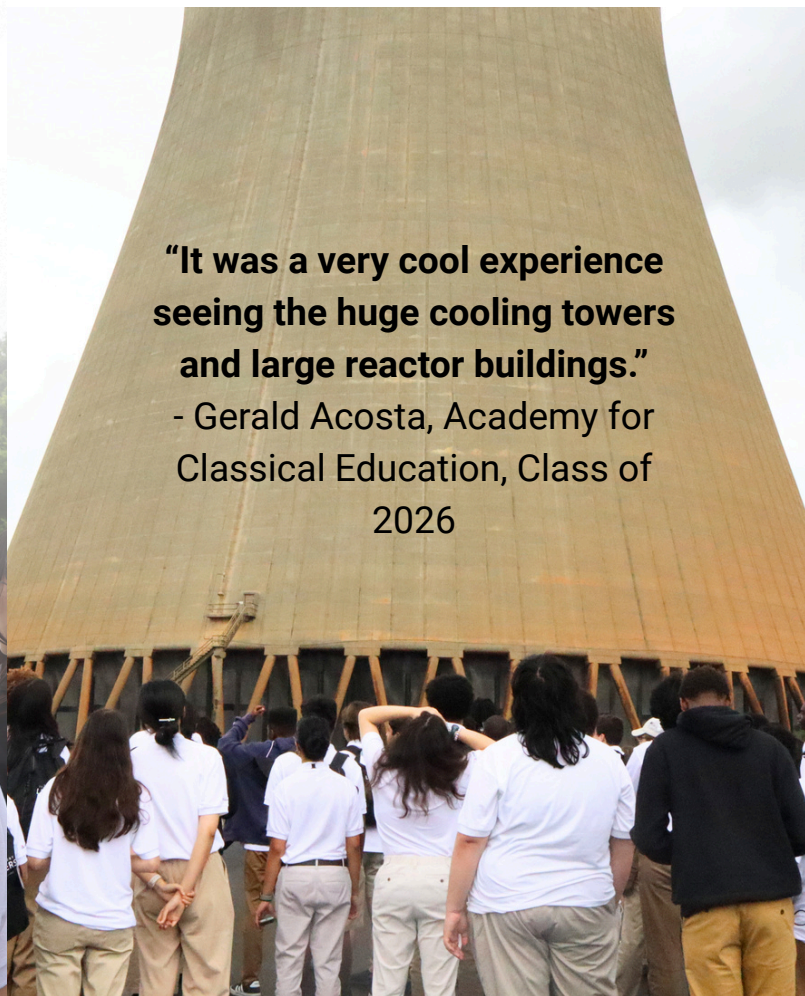
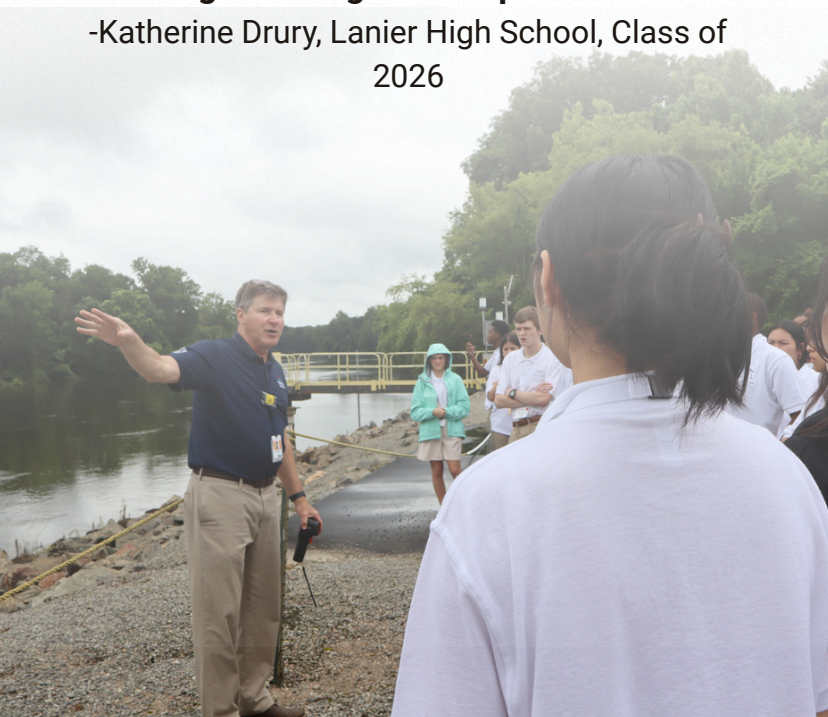


"I thought it was incredibly impressive, and the fact that it was the only plant in the country to build new nuclear units in the past 30 years was so cool to me. I loved the architecture and learning about how nuclear energy is produced."

-Ahmad-Ali Dhanani, Lee County High School, Class of 2028

"Honestly such an amazing experience and I loved learning the science and ethics behind the company and the process of generating nuclear power."

-Katherine Drury, Lanier High School, Class of 2026



"It was a very cool experience seeing the huge cooling towers and large reactor buildings."

- Gerald Acosta, Academy for Classical Education, Class of 2026

"It was really cool to get a behind the scenes look on what goes down to deliver and make power for our state."

- Germhir Driver, Perry High School, Class of 2028

Taking Care of our Earth: Service Project

The Oconee River Greenway - Milledgeville, GA



90 participants

270 volunteer hours
completed in one day



"I really enjoyed doing this service day, and I enjoyed bonding with my group while also helping clean up. I thought this was a fun and beneficial experience, and I loved being outside." -Priscilla Wong, Campbell High School, Class of 2026



\$9,000+ total economic impact

"Seeing the progress made and impact we had was very rewarding." -Eric Burgamy, Georgia Military College Preparatory School, Class of 2026

Key Accomplishments:

- Cleared limbs and mud from walking paths
- Removed approximately 2 curbside containers of trash
- Eradicated invasive plants, including kudzu and privet
- Discovered native species, such as river cane, for future biology projects





AGENDA SNAPSHOT

Sun, June 8th- Fri, June 13th
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; Kerry Bridges, Region Executive, Georgia Power**

The EarthCare Challenge Presented by Georgia Power- **Ben Hodges, Senior Environmental Specialist, Georgia Power**

Leadership Style Workshop- **Ryan Waldrep, Economic Development Rep, Georgia Power**

Meet & Greet- **Dr. Melissa Middlebrooks, Coordinator, Energy Assistance, Georgia Power; Georgia Power Employees**

All Camp Fun: Pool Party

TUESDAY: POWERING THE FUTURE: EARTHCARE ON TOUR

Plant Vogtle Tours + Learning- Plant Vogtle

College 101- 21st Century Leaders Alumni

Etiquette Lesson- Summer Leadership Team



WEDNESDAY: THE PERSONAL SIDE OF LEADERSHIP

Speak Up! Toastmasters Group- **Lisa Shinholster, President of Education, Toastmasters Club**

Project work

Unstoppable Leaders- **Tanisha Johnson, Education Coordinator, Georgia Power; Valeda Dover Education Coordinator, Georgia Power**

Leadership Dinner- **Maria Flores-Blackburn, Sr. Financial Analyst, Georgia Power, 21CL Board of Directors, 21CL Alumna; Blake Doherty, Manager, CCR PMO Strategy & Oversight; Stephanie Gossman, Policy General Manager, Georgia Power; Patrick Harris, Regional Executive, Georgia Power; Dr. Noris Price, Baldwin County Superintendent**

21CL Talent Show!

THURSDAY: LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT SERVING OTHERS

Taking Care of our Earth: Service Project- **Oconee River Greenway + Georgia College & State University**

Working with Others for Others- **Saira Mazhar, Talent Inclusion Manager, Georgia Power; John Blanding, Talent Inclusion Consultant at SCS**

Finalize Projects

FRIDAY: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

EarthCare Challenge Presentations- **Nikia Johnson, Workforce Development Specialist, Georgia Power; Jordan Laskey, Supervisor, Protection & Controls, Georgia Power; Gregory Roper, Account Executive, Georgia Power; Tanisha Johnson, Energy Efficiency Educational Cord, Georgia Power; Eric Draper, Transmission Analyst, Georgia Power; Bobby Evans, Team Leader Operations, Georgia Power; Owen Williamson, Manager, Operations, Georgia Power; Karla Iglesias, Engineering Supervisor, Georgia Power**

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

"I would describe this program as an amazing experience to develop your leadership skills, network with a diverse set of people, and learn all about taking care of our planet."

-Sophia Moore, Valdosta HS, Class of 2028