



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

21st Century Leaders Announces Winners for 2026 Georgia Youth Leadership Awards

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

(January 20, 2026) 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 21, 2026 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 2,750 students annually and this year’s 21 awardees – all in high school and all members of 21st Century Leaders – include nonprofit founders, entrepreneurs, advocates, and volunteers who truly represent the diversity of Georgia with students from DeKalb to Coffee to Pickens 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 23-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 2026 Georgia Youth Leadership Awards:

1. **Eunchan Choo**, Columbus High School, from Muscogee County
2. **Reese Davis**, Pickens High School, from Pickens County
3. **Blake Davis**, The Galloway School, from Fulton County
4. **Utshaho Gupta**, Atlanta International School, from Fulton County
5. **Taylor Harper**, Charles R. Drew Charter School, from DeKalb County
6. **Kareem Hassan**, Lakeside High School, from Columbia County

7. **Josie Herren**, Berrien High School, from Berrien County
8. **Keauna Holloway**, Kendrick High School, from Muscogee County
9. **Kezia Kotey**, DeKalb Early College Academy, from DeKalb County
10. **Mami Masoka**, Howard High School, from Bibb County
11. **Levi McCoy**, Davidson Fine Arts Magnet School, from Richmond County
12. **Dominic Mimbang**, Coffee High School, from Coffee County
13. **Justan Mosley**, Allatoona High School, from Cobb County
14. **Marleigh Robinson**, Westlake High School, from Fulton County
15. **Samadhi Salgado**, Emanuel County Institute, from Emanuel County
16. **Aadi Shah**, Innovation Academy, from Fulton County
17. **Omer Shoaib**, Brookwood High School, from Gwinnett County
18. **Leilanie Singleton**, Woodville Thompkins High School, from Chatham County
19. **MyKel Smith**, B.E.S.T. Academy, from Fulton County
20. **Brooke Smith**, KIPP Atlanta Collegiate High School, from Fulton County
21. **Kunyuan Zou**, Lambert High School, from Forsyth 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 will meet at a private Meet + Greet luncheon on Saturday, January 31, 2026 at Emory University'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 Quiana Pinkney of Comcast and Greg Clay of City of Atlanta, Mayor's Office (21CL Alumnus). For more information about the Be the Inspiration Gala [or to purchase a ticket to the event](#), 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 2026 student winners are Maranie Brown, BlackRock, 21CL Board of Directors*; Whitney Deal Marshall, Whitney Marshall Coaching*; Pranav Dhingra, Equifax, 21CL Board of Directors*; Hassim Diallo, JP Morgan*; Chandra Farley, City of Atlanta, Mayor's Office of Sustainability & Resilience*; Marty Fleischmann, The Masters Team*; Ashley Lee, The Coca-Cola Company, 21CL Board of Directors*; Paula Lett, Wellstar*; Mallom Ligon, Warner Bros. Discovery, 21CL Board of Directors; Lanita Lucas, Aflac*; Juan Mejia, JCM Ventures*; Dr. Brandon Morgan, Iconic Orthodontics, 21CL Alumnus*; Jon Neff, SKL'D, 21CL Board of Directors*; Johnny Nguyen, Atlanta Police Department*; Bre Pittman, Sage*; Dr. Adriane Randolph, Kennesaw State University*; Tiffany Reed, Purpose Possible*; Martha Revelo, DeKalb County Government*; Assi van Bastelaar, Atlassian*; Mary Walker, Invesco*; Matt Westmoreland, Atlanta City Council*

Georgia Youth Leadership Awards Selection Committee

All nominations were reviewed by our 23-member GYLA Selection Committee, composed of 21CL corporate volunteers, 21CL Board of Directors, and 21CL alumni and student peers. Committee members included the coaches indicated above, along with David Felfoldi, SHERPA Global; Shannon Wiggins, City of Chamblee, 21CL Alumni Board; and Hadil Adam, 2025 GYLA 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 via their [summer leadership institutes for the 2026 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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