

THE  
NEWARK  
MUSEUM  
OF  
ART

EXPLORERS  
PROGRAM



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

THE EXPLORERS PROGRAM AT  
THE NEWARK MUSEUM OF ART



## Teen Explorers: Our Eyes are on the 21st-Century Museum

There can be no doubt that our enthusiasm for The Newark Museum of Art's Explorers Program is matched tenfold by our Explorers themselves. We have mentored and supported these future leaders in college and career success in STEAM fields since 1995. In turn they have filled our galleries and new virtual realms with their passion and purpose.

It is an inspiration to see how our teens thrive with year-round exposure to art and science and go on to shape our world. Over four years of STEAM career mentoring and college preparation, the Explorers activate our Museum with fresh perspectives on the visitor experience.

The curiosity and work ethics of our Explorers are rewarded with one-of-a-kind, real-world mentoring by our experienced and dedicated staff, who support them as they tackle all aspects of the museum field. As individuals and as part of a cohesive team of peers, the Explorers propel us forward.

More than our national awards and recognition from leading funders in the industry, and more than the 100% college acceptance rate for graduating seniors for the past 15 years, it is the personal journeys of our Explorers that are the true measure of our impact. Their own words best express the challenges they have overcome and successes they have achieved for themselves and for their communities.



**Shirley Thomas**  
Senior Director of Education



**Jessica Nuñez**  
Manager of Youth Programs

Seniors	<b>Class of 2022</b>		Sophomores	<b>Class 2024</b>		
	Chinaza Agba	1		Jahnah Alfred	22	
	Olutosin Akinsiku	2		Brithany Dolores	23	
	Tony Bissoon	3		Stacy Folas	24	
	Leah Cruz	4		Zakai Lassiter	25	
	Namissa Koita	5		Jeilenz Saint-Sulne	26	
	Jaiden Oko	6				
	Caleb Raughley	7				
	Sarae Reed	8				
	Kamara Robinson	9		Freshman	<b>Class 2025</b>	
	Fanta Toure	10			Nmesomachukwu Aghaji	28
	Maruf Uddin	11			Phoebe Brown	29
Kezia Williams	12	Moboluwaduro Fola-Akintola	30			
Juniors	<b>Class 2023</b>		Nasir Glover	31		
	Hanaan Adenaike	14	Kamill Hicks	32		
	Isabella Almeida	15	Sumayah Orphelia	33		
	De'Travius Eli Bethea	16	Ronald Palmer	34		
	Amaya Colon	17				
	Maria Gonzalez	18				
	Ashley Hernandez	19				
Stokely Palmer Jr.	20					



# CLASS OF **2022**





## **CHINAZA AGBA**

**CLASS OF 2022**

My name is Chinaza Agba and I'm a 12th grader who goes to North Star Academy Charter School. I joined the Museum in the summer of 2019. The program has helped me grow in many ways. I learned to be more outspoken about my issues and I had another support system outside of my home and high school that I could lean towards. I enjoyed working in the different departments of the Museum like the planetarium, the accounting department, and the Museum shop. My favorite duty as an explorer is helping on community days and teen nights. The workshops that I believe benefitted me the most were the interview and resume workshops as this helped me in my college application process. I was able to create the perfect resume that told my high school career with the help of the Museum workshops. I believe an Explorer is someone who is ready to actively learn and grow. I believe an Explorer is someone who always has something to contribute. Finally, I know the lessons that I learned in the Explorer program will always follow me no matter where I am or who I am in the future.

# TOSIN AKINSIKU

## CLASS OF 2022

My name is Tosin Akinsiku, I am a senior at North Star Academy and I joined the Explorers Program in the 10th grade. For the last three years, and for about four hours each week, I have spent my time at The Newark Museum of Art. Many people may believe that working at a Museum would be an outdated experience; however, my experience at the Museum has been the exact opposite. I have met the kindest, funniest, and most intelligent people in my high school experience within my Explorers cohort. The group of students in the program derive from diverse experiences and they teach me about a broad range of topics, allowing me to become a more socially aware individual. I have strengthened my communication skills, become outgoing, and acquired professional skills not typically taught in school. Learning about loans, resume building and etiquette has been an experience that I am very grateful for. The benefits of the program have been an exciting part of my high school tenure including museum trips, college visits, and internships within various departments. Being an explorer for the last three years of my life has shaped me into a more pragmatic adult who faces challenges with confidence and who is ready to properly tackle college.





# TONY BISSOON

## CLASS OF 2022

My name is Tony Bissoon, and I'm currently a senior at North Star Academy High School. When I first joined the program around my first year in high school, I found it hard to interact with people as I was often shy and more introverted. But now, as I am a senior, the Explorers Program helped me break out of my shell. I am now able to interact with new people to forge connections and learn essential skills to prepare me for the real world better. The many workshops where I built and refined my resume to better budgeting habits taught me many skills that I will carry both through college and after that will help me to have a more secure future. My favorite part of the program is the many trips we took throughout New Jersey and New York, I was immersed in many different experiences, such as various colleges and museums.

My favorite department was MakerSPACE, where I had the opportunity to work with little kids with different art and science projects. Seeing their faces light up as they finished their task with markers scattered across the table, or seeing their bath bomb fizz made the other Explorers and I smile and laugh. Being a part of this program, I have gained friends, new experiences, and essential life skills I carry throughout my future.

# LEAH CRUZ

## CLASS OF 2022

My name is Leah Cruz and I am a Senior at Saint Vincent Academy. This is my third and last year in the Explorer's Program. I learned about the Program through students at my school who were already members. I applied because I thought it would be a good first job for me and a chance to make my own money. Little did I know that the Explorers Program would offer so much more than just being an after-school job. Being an Explorer has provided me with so many amazing opportunities that I wouldn't have otherwise had. Meeting other students outside of my own school and church community has been one of my favorite things of being an Explorer. I was able to meet so many awesome people who I can relate to. My favorite internship was with Creative Play where I was able to spend time with children exploring the Museum and making different arts and crafts. I loved interacting with the children and hearing all their fun stories. From creating a resume to attending public speaking workshops, I have gained so much useful knowledge that I now feel ready to apply to my life outside of high school. I hope to carry what I have learned in professionalism into my college career. I cannot begin to express the gratitude I feel for the Newark Museum's Explorers Program and I will forever be grateful for everyone I have met and everything I have learned.







## **NAMISSA KOITA**

**CLASS OF 2022**

My name is Namissa Koita and I am currently a senior at Marion P. Thomas Charter High School. I joined the Explorers Program the summer leading into my sophomore year. This program has allowed me to understand art in a new, more meaningful light. Before this program, art to me was about the picture and how it appealed to the eyes. The Explorers Program has shifted my views of art from surface level understanding to deeper, more meaningful knowledge. One powerful encounter I've had within The Newark Museum of Art is with the portrait of the four youngest children of William Rankin Sr. The portrait was made to commemorate Matilda, his youngest daughter. It taught me that art has meaning and depth. It is an expression of many things and not just what it seems at first sight.

The Explorers Program means so much to a growing young adult like me. It has introduced me to so much growth and educational opportunities. This program also opened my eyes to a reality I thought I would not know about until college. Through this program I was able to tour schools like Princeton and understand life skills such as financing and budgeting. The Explorers Program means so much to me and I would not be who I am today without it.

# JAIDEN OKO

CLASS OF 2022

Hi, my name is Jaiden Oko and I'm in the 12th grade attending Technology High School. I joined The Newark Museum of Art Explorers Program the summer before my 10th-grade year. The time I have spent at the Museum has always been spent in good spirits. For me, this institution has become my second home. Over the years my peers and I have developed many skills such as time management, professionalism, and public speaking. Sometimes our meetings after school helped us get away from our stressful academic endeavors, but they have also helped us learn and prepare for our lives after high school. The program entails workshops, teen nights, community days, and trips. My favorite part of the program is the community days. On these days we celebrate some of the important events in the history of our country such as MLK Day, Black History Month, and Women's History Month, and on these days I enjoy learning more in depth about our history and listening to the different voices and perspectives present at the occasion. The trips we went on are also to be remembered. The friends I made here were also a crucial part of my growth as they positively influenced me to be the best version of myself. In all, this is what it means to be an Explorer, the positive growth, the great experiences, and opportunities.





## CALEB RAUGHLEY

### CLASS OF 2022

My Name is Caleb Raughley, I am currently in 12th grade, and I joined the Explorer's program in 2019. I would like to thank you for supporting the Newark Museum of Art and tell you how it has affected me as a high school student. I am presently finishing my third year in the Explorers Program.

The Explorers Program is affecting my future by giving me a multitude of different internships. As a sophomore in high school, I didn't know what I wanted to do when I graduated. All of the internships that the program offers have helped me decide what I want to do after I graduate high school. It has also helped me learn more about art and how different artists use their work to inspire others. One of the most powerful experiences I have had at The Newark Museum of Art was when I saw Andy Warhol's tomato can boxes. The piece has influenced me by showing that ANYTHING can be art and that it doesn't have to be commercialized.

The Explorers Program has also helped me be more confident with all of the workshops it provides. One workshop was to help with public speaking. I feel that it will help me be more successful by learning more about presenting so that I can convey a speech in a more compelling way. The Explorers Program is an integral part of the Museum because it encourages teens to learn more about art in a way that wouldn't be possible without the program. Finally, I would like to thank you again for supporting The Newark Museum of Art and helping this program become even better.

# SARAE REED

## CLASS OF 2022

My name is Sarae, I am a 12th grader at North Star Academy and I joined the Explorers Program the summer before my 10th grade year. The program has helped me grow out of my shell and improve my communication skills. I have gained a lot more confidence since being a part of the Explorers Program. My favorite part about being an Explorer is getting the chance to work with younger kids in activities and art making. Seeing kids make new friends and build confidence throughout the summer is one of my favorite things to experience. The resume building workshop has been the most helpful workshop that I have done. It gave me a head start on what I needed for my college applications and other scholarship applications. I like the community aspect best about the museum. It brings people together to have fun and try new things. Being an Explorer means to build new connections, new memories and step outside of your comfort zone. This experience has greatly prepared me for what is to come. It made me realize that trying is the best option and that there will always be something new for me in my future. This program has gotten me started on my college process and has made it easier for me to be prepared for all the obstacles I might face.





# KAMARA ROBINSON

## CLASS OF 2022

Hello! My name is Kamara Robinson, and I am 17 years old and a senior at West Orange High School. The Explorer Program has been an enriching experience filled with laughter, love, and the learning of important lessons that I will carry in my heart throughout the rest of my life. When I started this program, I was just finishing my freshman year of high school and was very shy and didn't have a voice of my own. However, through team-building with my peers, and participating in workshops that helped strengthen our team dynamic, I was able to feel comfortable here and speak out. This program has challenged me to be creative, solution-oriented, and daring in both school and life in general. The energy of everyone in the program is very welcoming and I ended up building friendships that will last beyond my completion of the program.

The time that is put into making sure all Explorers have a well-rounded experience does not go unnoticed. The financial literacy workshops have helped me make more informed decisions on how to handle my money, and has educated me on investing and having multiple streams of income, which is important for young adults to know. One of my favorite highlights in the program was the SAT prep workshops which helped me boost my SAT score 100 points which was a real victory for me. To me, being an Explorer means to be an individual that is determined and willing to have the humility to learn and go the extra mile in life. Now that I will be graduating from the program, I am going to miss it dearly, but the way I've blossomed in this program will be with me forever and I deeply appreciate every other Explorer and memory we've made together.

# FANTA TOURE

## CLASS OF 2022

My name is Fanta Toure, I am 18 years old and I attend Donald M. Payne Tech High School. I joined the Explorers Program in 2018, during my freshman year. Besides expanding my knowledge of skills and expectations of college and career environments, the Museum has helped me grow to become an overall considerate person. The foundation of almost everything we did at the Museum was teamwork, and with that comes the consideration of our peers' time, skills, and communication. My favorite duties include planning and executing events. Whether it was a community event or a teen night, the involvement in those events always felt very fulfilling. I also have found the workshops and activities outside of our duties to be very useful, including financial literacy, professionalism, and the team-building exercises. I know that they will be vital in the near future when in different work or school environments. The Museum was always the perfect balance of social and professional interaction in my life, and to be an Explorer to me was to be a well-rounded person.





## MARUF UDDIN

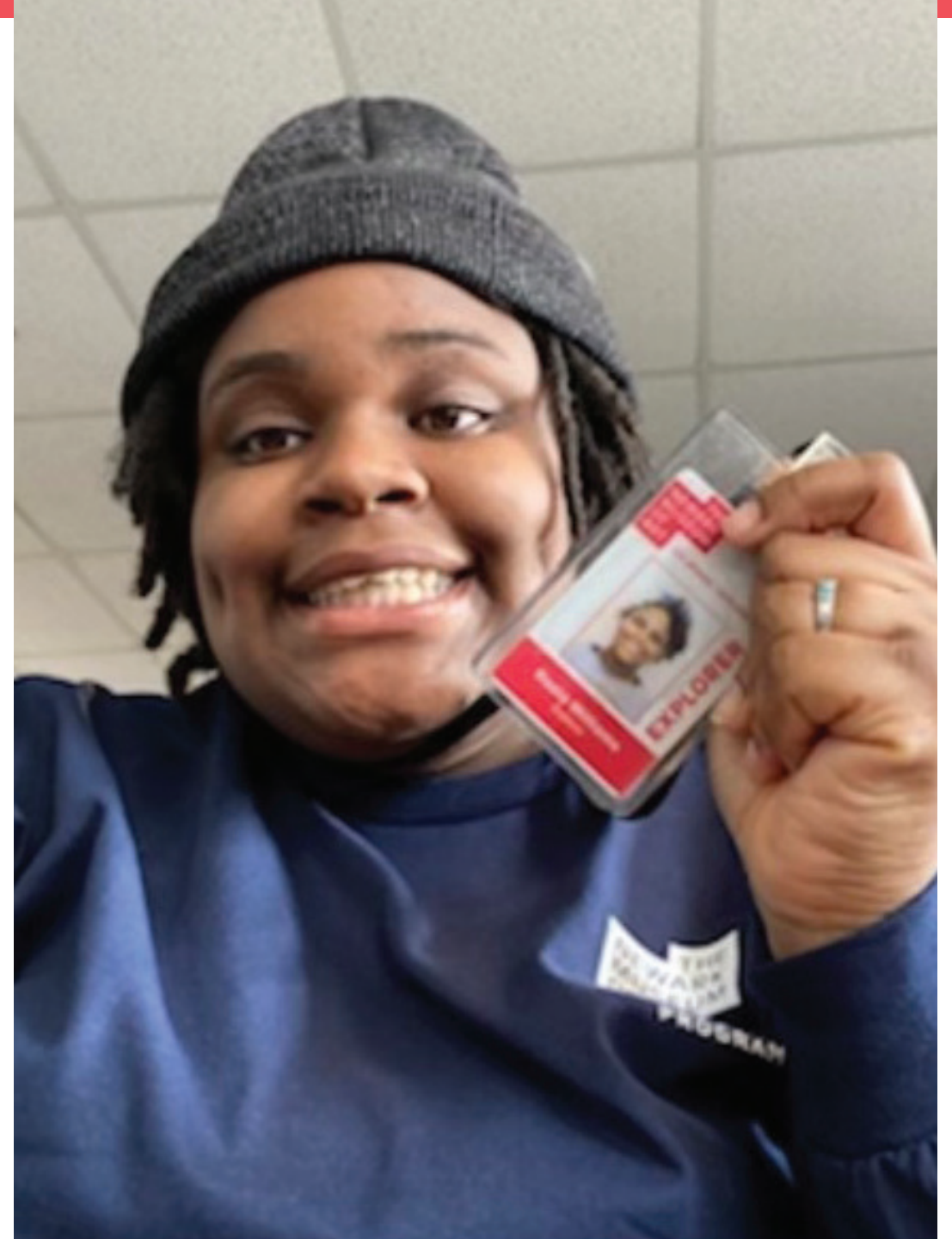
### CLASS OF 2022

My name is Maruf Uddin and I am a senior at Science Park High School. I have been an Explorer since the summer of 2019. One of the best decisions I made was to apply to the Explorers Program because of the many things the program has helped me with. Through my internships and tours, I developed strong public speaking skills and more courage. Before the program I would stutter often, but as a result of giving tours I have significantly overcome that problem and am more confident when I speak. Giving these tours and learning about the Museum's different art pieces is one of my favorite experiences as an Explorer, along with hosting planetarium shows. Being an Explorer is really amazing, as I'm now a part of a larger cohort of people. I have befriended other Explorers and those friendships exist in and out of the Museum. To me, being an Explorer means being welcoming of others and being friendly with them. Because of the program, I feel inclined to help my peers and take initiative to complete goals and tasks. I feel that being an Explorer is going to be a big part of my life when I start my career. The program itself is a career readiness program and it has done a great job being that. It has set a standard of how to interact with my supervisor and colleagues, and the type of professional respect that should exist between us. I also learned skills in professionalism, resume building, and interviewing, all of which will help secure the jobs I want in the future. I am truly grateful for being granted the opportunity to be an explorer.

# KEZIA WILLIAMS

CLASS OF 2022

Hello! My name is Kezia Williams and I am a senior at Arts High School. I have been in the program since my sophomore year and these last couple of years have been great. Being given this opportunity to work with such amazing people in such a great place is a blessing and an everlasting experience. I really like that we do a lot of things to help the community. The Teen Nights are one of my favorite things because we put out cool flyers that catch kids' attention and tell them, "Hey, come out for a night of fun for FREE!" Things like this are really important in a community because it not only lets kids have fun, but it also lets them be safe while doing so. These last few months have been very stressful for me, dealing with the pandemic and other personal things in my life, but coming into work, seeing Ms. Jess, Ms. Shirley and other familiar faces make it so much better. Now this isn't necessarily a part of my "job" but one of my favorite things to do here is listen to calming music and walk around to read/look at the cool exhibits and art pieces. I definitely will miss being here at the Museum. Working with the Museum has really expanded my mind to see the best in things, as well as the bigger picture. Anything to do with the Museum enhances skills. When we go on trips, it is like a family outing, with all your siblings sharing great information, teaching you right from wrong, and enjoying the experience. Overall. You learn things everywhere you go and when you're at the Museum, it just gets better. Last but not least, when you work at the Museum, it is very enjoyable to get out of the house, knowing there is something great just waiting ahead. I really appreciate that. Being here, I have learned to move a little out of my comfort zone (for the best), make new friends, and be an example for other kids.







# CLASS OF 2023



# HANAAN ADENAIKE

## CLASS OF 2023

My name is Hanaan Adenaïke. I am a junior in high school and I joined the Explorers Program Fall 2021. The Explorers Program has been a wonderful experience and opportunity for me. The program's activities and projects have all been very fulfilling. But my favorite programs are community days. Community days consist of helping people, participating in workshops, and working hands-on with my fellow Explorers.

They are one of my favorite things about the program because I can benefit my community, learn more about different cultures, and build my teamwork skills. I would say that my Teen Event Building has been most helpful to my school, work, and social life. It has allowed me to create bonds with my other Explorers. And this teamwork has carried onto my school and social life, I have learned to better cooperate with others, and how to efficiently finish work while working with groups. To be an Explorer is a very important thing to me. It has allowed for me to really change as a person, and become more concerned with the lives of others around me, along with everyone in my community, and others. Being able to create something from scratch, and turn it into something amazing has influenced my future career goals, and gives me a head start on figuring out how to map out the rest of my life. Being an Explorer has allowed me to grow a more beautiful personality.





# ISABELLA ALMEIDA

CLASS OF 2023

Hi, my name is Isabella Almeida and I am a Junior in Linden High School. I joined the Explorers program around November 2021 and since the beginning I've loved it. I have only been in this program for a couple of months and have met nice enthusiastic people. The program has helped me grow in many ways, for example in communication and planning. I learned how to improve my public speaking skills, listening actively and finding out about art.

What I have liked best about the program are the events. In the events the Explorers bring ideas and activities that people will enjoy. My first teen event at The Newark Museum of Art was the winter event. The winter event was fun and we had an indoor skating rink. In our teen events we do many raffles, give out food, and sometimes do movie nights. I learn a lot about different types of cultures, music, and even dances. My favorite duties as an Explorer are doing projects, hosting, and being at the workshops. What I like best about the Museum is the different types of paintings and sculptures. For me, being an Explorer is someone who is responsible and can complete tasks. This experience will influence my future by knowing how to work as a team and getting things done.

# DE'TRAVIUS ELI BETHEA

## CLASS OF 2023

Interestingly enough, on the day I wrote this my phone was taken by Ms. Shirley as she caught me on my phone twice. I'll use this anecdote as an analogy of my entire experience as a member of the Explorers Program. But first, my name is Eli Bethea. I am 17, I go to North Star Washington Park, I joined the Explorers Program in 2021, and I love the program and everyone in it. Alright now that formalities are out of the way, let me begin.

When I was on my phone earlier, it represented how I was before the program, sometimes a bit disconnected and disinterested in society, especially during the pandemic. However, when Ms. Shirley took my phone, it could symbolize how the Explorer Program forced me out of my bubble that lingered during the pandemic. The Museum forcing me out of my social isolation has been one of the best things to happen to me. In addition to this, I love helping people out at the community days and teen nights. In fact, I would argue that this has been the biggest contribution the Explorers Program has made to my life: discovering how much I love helping people. It is my favorite thing to do at meetings and community events, and I will love to keep doing it until my dying days. This program has truly been a blessing, and I will always remember my first festival at Fiesta Latina. I had an amazing time at the program, and the feeling of helping people one after another is an experience that I will never forget.





## AMAYA COLON

CLASS OF 2023

The Museum and being an Explorer means so much to me, especially now that I am in high school. I used to be a camper at the Museum and didn't really know what Explorers did. I saw them during class, when we were in galleries, and outside while they were making sure that no one got hurt.

Since becoming an Explorer, my outlook on myself changed. Being at the Museum and doing projects, and working and sitting in meetings and workshops have helped me realize how much of a hard worker I am. My skills have increased from when I was younger. I mean younger mentally, not physically, because not that much time has passed from when I was a camper - just enough for me to grow a bigger and better emotionally. I always knew that at the Museum everyone was like a big family, and now I see why. After a hard day of school, it feels so nice to be surrounded by the people that I am close with at the Museum. It feels like home, where I am safe. The museum has helped me with my confidence and happiness. I have gained new work ethics and skills from being at the Museum, and I know that I will only obtain more the longer that I work there. I hope that more people become campers and Explorers. The Museum staff does a great job making sure that people have a good time and feel like family when they walk through the doors. Everyone here simply deserves the best.

# MARIA GONZALEZ

CLASS OF 2023

My name is Maria Gonzalez and I am a junior attending Science Park high school. I recently joined the Explorers program in my junior year and have been a part of the Museum since September of 2021. The program has overall helped me in many different ways. It has given me many opportunities to grow in different areas and learn new things. It has helped me become more independent and outgoing. Not only that, but I am now also able to work on things more diligently, as well as being able to plan activities more efficiently while being open minded.

What I have liked the most about the program is being able to work and share ideas with others, as well as planning events and going on trips to different colleges/museums. Overall, my favorite duties as an Explorer would be being in charge of planning events and helping with new ideas within the program. One of the most helpful activities that have helped me in life has been working on presentation and public speaking. What I like most about the Museum is that it is both a very fun and great learning experience. We not only get to work on things that'll help us in the future, but we also get to have activities and events that make the experience entertaining. Being an Explorer is very rewarding and feels like an achievement. I know this experience will have a great impact on what I do and will help me prosper in many different ways. I can take many of the things I learned for when I go to college and get my future job.





## **ASHLEY HERNANDEZ**

### **CLASS OF 2023**

For the time that I have been an Explorer, the Museum has shown me a different perspective on how to view things in not only paintings and sculptures, but in the real world. The Museum has helped prepare me to be more successful in the future by improving my time management, helping me be more open to talking to a group, teaching me how to see two or more sides to a problem, and to not make assumptions based on how something may appear.

The Museum sets up several meetings for us to not only get to know one another, but also to teach us how to handle ourselves when we get stressed or are presented with difficult choices. We also learn how to listen to what others have done in their lives to get to where they are now. In addition, the Museum provides us with trips to different museums to see and learn about different types of art. You may look at a painting and see a regular painting, but once you take a closer look you realize that there is much more than what meets the eye. You start to see the different shapes and patterns the artists used and what color tone they put in it and you think about why they made the painting and what it may mean. At the Museum I feel excited to see what I will encounter, who I will be working with, and what I will be doing. Being an Explorer really boosts my confidence because I am exposed to and work with people of different backgrounds and I talk to large groups or crowds.

# STOKELY PALMER JR.

## CLASS OF 2023

The Newark Museum of Art has been a part of my life for almost my entire life. Although this is my first year as an Explorer, I have been to the camp since I was 3 years old. The Explorers Program gives you an amazing experience and valuable life skills that will be vital in the future. As a high school student, the Explorers Program provides me with time management skills, critical thinking, and help with handling peer pressure, which are all problems and skills that are necessary to have in high school.

The Museum has made me see things differently throughout my life. For example, I look at different cultures in a new way as I have more of a background based on art. Another positive outlook is that it provides us with the ability and mindset to focus on our futures such as college and jobs. The Museum has always been a part of my life as I had gone to camp as a young boy. Some of my favorite Museum exhibits to visit were the Planetarium and Dynamic Earth, mainly because I would like to play up there. At the moment my favorite piece is the "Monument to Malcolm X" because it has to do with black history and Malcolm X is one of my favorite civil rights activists. Throughout the years of going to the Museum, I have had many different outlooks. For example, before I would pay attention to just the art itself and nothing else. I would focus on the colors and what was there, like certain figures. Now I see more than just that. I look at why the artist chose certain colors and what the artifacts there are to resemble certain things.







# CLASS OF 2024





# JAHNAH ALFRED

## CLASS OF 2024

My name is Jahnah Alfred. I'm a sophomore at Great Oaks Legacy Charter High School and joined the Explorers program in late October early November 2021. Being a part of this program has been such a joy and very beneficial for my growth into the young adult world and responsibilities. The Explorers Program has helped me with real world tasks that most young adults would have to struggle with on their own.

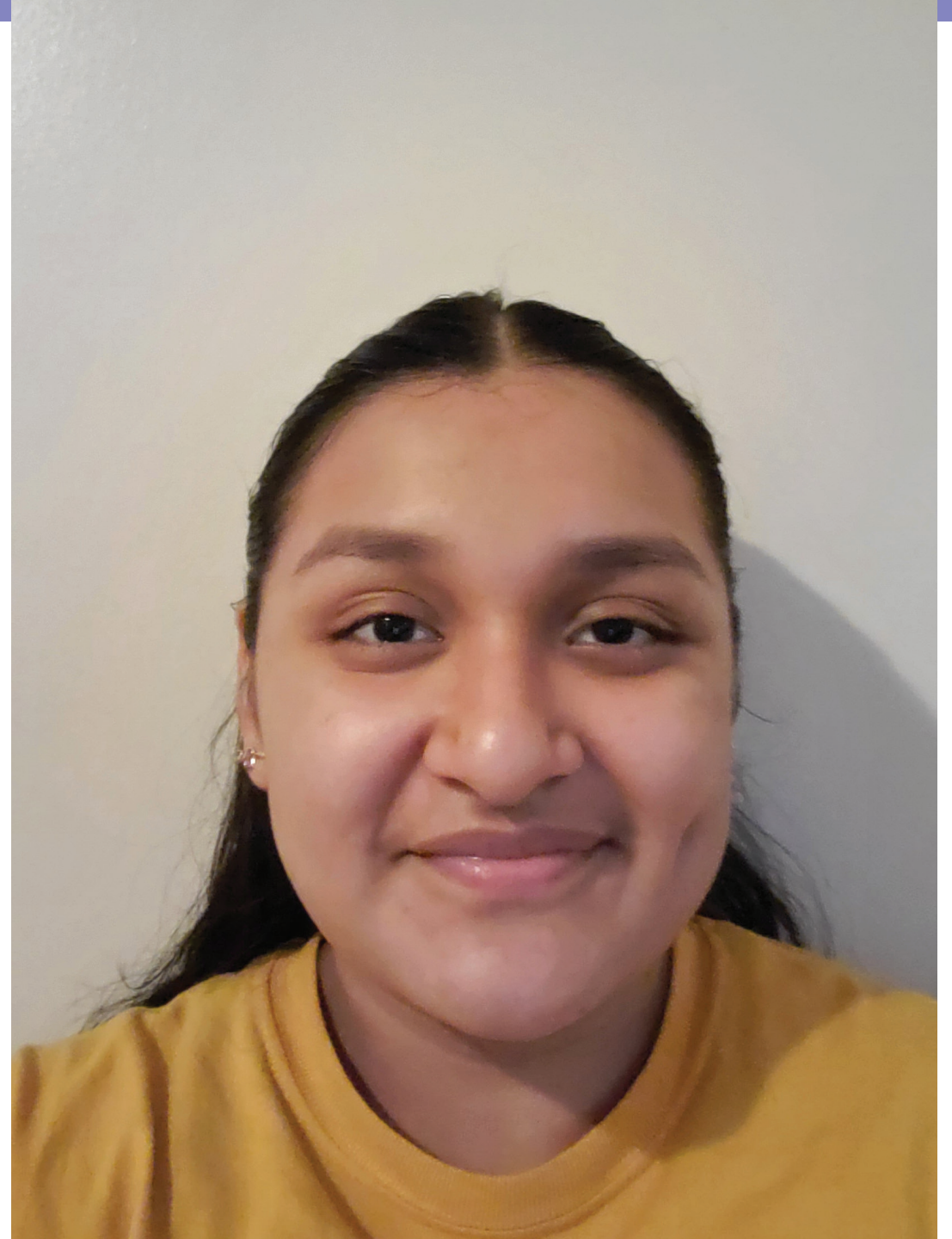
Being in an environment with new people and socializing, filling out a resume, public speaking, being independent, clear communication, and just real-world responsibilities. The best part about this program is the safe place that is created within, being able to learn from one another, and growing as one. My favorite duty as an Explorer is the projects. The practice tour around the Museum has been the most helpful activity to me, majorly influencing my public speaking skills and receiving feedback from people in my age group has helped a lot. Being an Explorer to me means being someone entering a new stage in life. "Explorer" is the perfect title. Exploring new heights in life, people, stages, opportunities, and obstacles. This experience will heavily influence my future, feel like it actually is setting me up for my future career(s). Most activities that we do are directly preparing us for the future: college readiness, professional work environments, filling out resumes, public speaking, and socializing. The Explorers program is a step into the future.

# BRITHANY DOLORES

## CLASS OF 2024

Hello, my name is Brithany A. Dolores. I am a Sophomore at Saint Vincent Academy and joined the Explorers Program in the summer of 2021. The Explorers Program is an extraordinary way to be out of my comfort zone, and build a set of skills that will help my career and work. My favorite parts of the program are helping the community and organizing events for everyone of all race, age, and backgrounds.

The workshops and events we attend are helpful for my school, work and social life by applying principles like being respectful, attentive, punctual, and efficient. As duties and responsibilities go hand-in-hand, my favorite assigned duty has been helping people create their own art. Seeing kids and adults trying to put their imagination into art is a joyful experience for me. The Museum has many delightful aspects to it, but the community days that are my favorite part of the Museum. I find it fascinating when I see other cultures show off their dances, food, broad forms of art, and the energy that is formed among the community interest in the culture. Being an Explorer is not only a superficial search for our talents, but an exploration of our major abilities. It helps us discover ourselves through the team and the assignments that are given. For me, being an Explorer is discovering my talents and finding discomfort, and being out of my skin as much as I can.





## STACY FOLAS

### CLASS OF 2024

My name is Stacy Folas, and I'm a sophomore at West Orange High School. I joined the Explorers Program in August of 2021. In the few months I've been a part of this program, I have grown into a much more responsible individual. Working alongside other students and partaking in activities to make me more well-rounded has been a really great experience for me.

What I enjoy most about the program is working at the events held at the Museum, because I really enjoy meeting new people and helping them make the best out of their visits. My duties as an Explorer also require me to welcome people or answer any questions they have about events. This has made me a more sociable person outside of the program. To me, being an Explorer means working with others to improve the overall experience for visitors. I think this experience will have a positive influence on my future because I'm learning very important life skills, such as time-management and creativity. This can easily be applied to my life outside of high school. Overall, I have really enjoyed my time at the Newark Museum of Art as an Explorer, and I look forward to seeing how much more this program will help me to grow into an even better person.

# ZAKAI LASSITER

## CLASS OF 2024

My name is Zakai Lassiter I'm a sophomore in high school and attend Newark Collegiate Academy. I've been in the program since September 2021. The program has helped me grow, because I've worked in different types of events helping families out with arts and crafts, where different things are in the Museum, and what the event is about.

What I liked best about the program is definitely the movie nights, where there is a movie playing in the auditorium and guests are welcome to watch and enjoy themselves. My favorite duty as an Explorer is having a station to myself during events so when people come, I can help them get started on the project we have for them. That also taps into helping me grow as a person when it comes down to being invested in whatever I'm doing to the best of my ability and just having fun doing it. The prompts and writing assignments are very beneficial towards school, because it's extra practice for essays. Also, just in life, it helps me work on my professionalism. I think the galleries are the best things in the Museum, because it historically educates anyone who walks past them and reads what it's about, and it's just cool to look at all the art someone made. Being Explorer means to learn through art and to have fun doing it. This experience will influence my future by positively preparing me for college, jobs in the future, and myself as a person.





# JEILENZ SAINT-SULNE

## CLASS OF 2024

Hello, my name is Jeilenz Saint-Sulne and I am a sophomore attending Great Oaks Legacy Charter High School. I joined the Explorers Program in October of 2021 and since then I've grown in more ways than one. The Explorer Program has helped me expand my knowledge about applying for jobs, handing in a task on time, etc.

I liked our team building exercises best. My favorite duties as an Explorer are to give tours, even though I haven't given one yet it was fun to prepare for it and imagine what it would be like if I gave one. A workshop that has been helpful to me was the one on self-defense. I learned that the best option in a potentially violent situation is to take the high road because it might have saved your life. Also, another workshop that has been helpful to me was Financial Literacy. I got some tips on how to manage and save my money as well as how to spend it wisely. I like the community within the Explorers the best at the Museum. I haven't gotten to know everyone yet, but from what I've seen so far, I like being here. To me, to be an Explorer is to be optimistic and be able to adapt to situations in a short amount of time. To be able to see things for not just what they are, but more. I think this experience will help my future a great deal because of the skills I've honed here. Thank you!



CLASS OF  
**2025**





# **NMESOMACHUKWU AGHAJI**

## **CLASS OF 2025**

My name is Nmesomachukwu Aghaji. I'm a freshman at Great Oaks Legacy Charter High School and I joined the Explorers program in October of 2021. Being an Explorer has taught me a lot about myself and the world around me. Since I've joined this program, I've learned to be disciplined from balancing school work and being an Explorer. I also never saw myself caring about art, but because of the work they have some of us Explorers doing, I've actually gotten interested in art and art history. Being an Explorer has opened my eyes to different cultures

As an Explorer I've also had the opportunity to gain crucial knowledge about life after high school. I learned about managing my finances and why they're so important, finding the right career path for me, how to apply for college, and being a professional. Being an Explorer has shown me what it means to be responsible. And in this program, I feel accepted and prepared for the world that lies ahead of me. I'm happy to have met the wonderful people I have, through this program who encourage me, support me, and accept me and push me to be the best version of myself. Being an Explorer is a gift and an opportunity that I won't take for granted.



# PHOEBE BROWN

## CLASS OF 2025

My name is Phoebe Brown. I am a freshman at North Star Academy Washington Park High School and I joined the Explore's Program in the Fall of 2021. Being in this program I have been exposed to many opportunities helping me with my personal growth and overall creative expression.

I enjoy the concepts of art, creating things in your own way and then presenting your projects. I love how the program allows you to be very expressive while building your character, pushing you to be more responsible. The workshop with experienced individuals of the law sector came to talk to us about college preparation was very insightful. They also gave us general advice about enjoying our high school experience and hobbies which I appreciated greatly. Being part of this program has helped me to get out of my shell, interacting and socializing more with others. Ultimately, I am very happy and proud to be a part of this program getting to learn new things about art and getting to know more people.





## **MOBOLUWADURO FOLA-AKINTOLA**

### **CLASS OF 2025**

Hi! My name is Moboluwaduro Fola-Akintola. I'm in the 9th grade at Washington Park High School, Northstar Academy. I joined the program late 2021, in October. The program has pushed me to set priorities for myself as well as new goals.

As per the program, I enjoy the experiences we have from excursions to learning new skills with my fellow Explorers. I also like how we have the freedom to work on our projects, for example, researching what speaks to us. Despite my fear of eerie noises, I really enjoy walking through the galleries and breaking down the messages of the artists behind them. Helpful activities include college preparation activities, our projects, public speaking, and our skills classes because it's fun to try new things. To me being an Explorer is being an ambassador. It's an extension of your ideals and goals, but it's also a form of providing outlets to yourself and others. I appreciate the opportunity I have by being here in this program and going forward, I'm plan to make the best experience ever.

# NASIR GLOVER

## CLASS OF 2025

Hi, my name is Nasir I'm in the 9th grade and I have been with the Explorer Program for a little over 6 months. In these 6 months, the Explorers Program has helped me mature and grow as a person with the countless activities and workshops. I like the program so much because when you're in the Museum there is never a dull moment. For the most part, you're always doing something interesting and engaging so you really never get bored.

When I'm at the Museum one of my favorite things is to socialize with the other Explorers while working on our projects. Out of all of the workshops we have done, I feel like the self-defense workshop was the best one. The self-defense workshop was very fun and engaging and it's something I've never done before, and I seriously considered taking the classes outside of the Museum. One of the things I like the best about the Museum, in general, is the environment and energy in the Museum. When I'm in the Museum I feel relaxed and stress free. I think to be an Explorer is to be an independent young person who is able to manage and do well in all work environments. I think the Museum is giving me a head start in the workforce and it's going to give me an advantage over other people my age. The way the Museum reinforces positive thinking and decision-making gives you a better sense of maturity which is important to have growing up.





# KAMILL HICKS

## CLASS OF 2025

I'm Kamill. I'm in the 9th grade and I joined the Explorers Program in 2021. The Explorers Program is helping me become more social to those I don't know or just meet. I don't really have a favorite thing to do here.

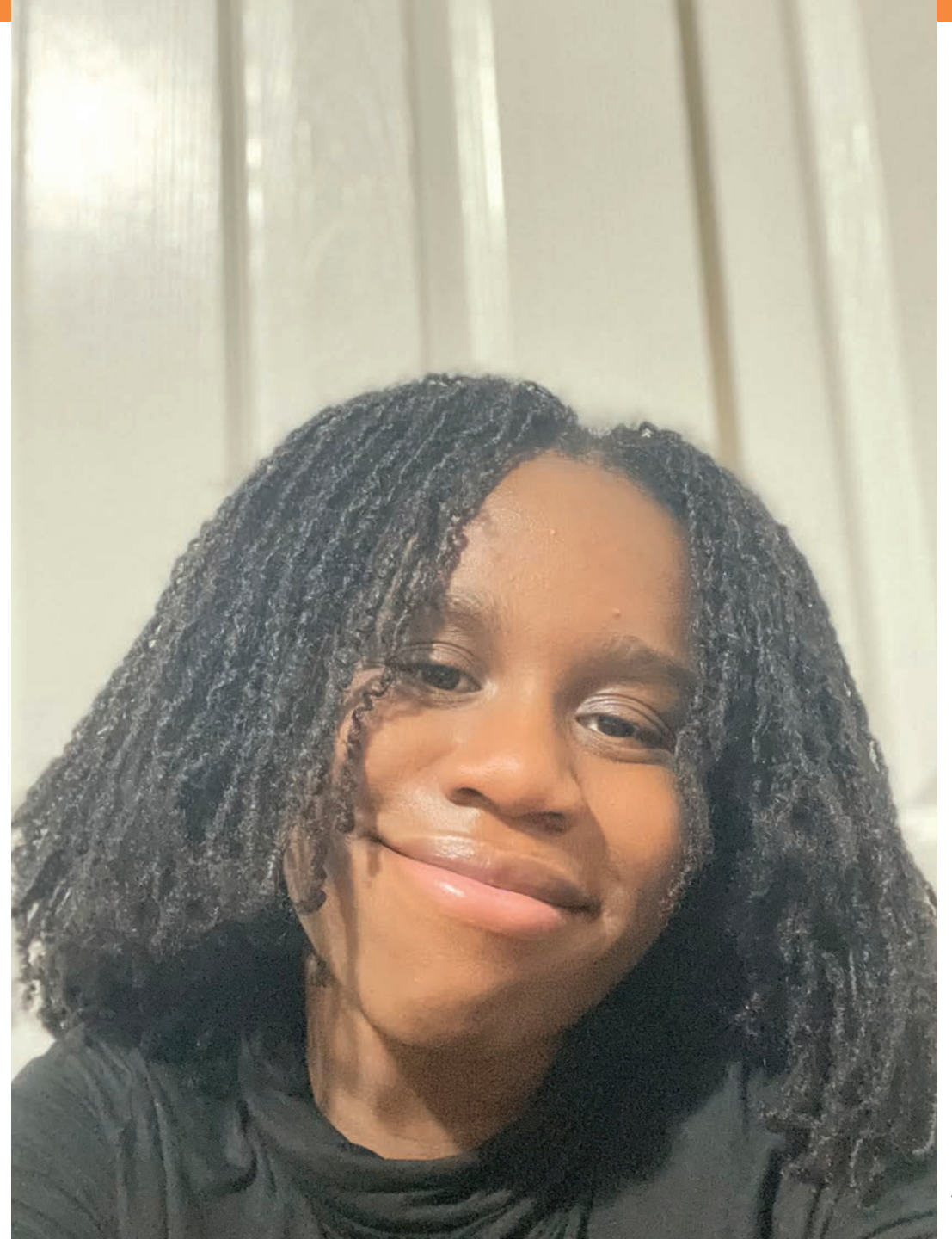
I worked with kids who have ADHD. It helped with my patience and understanding others. It showed me how easy it is to work with anyone if you just talk to them. And that you don't have to do everything by yourself. I think the best thing about working here is that you learn something new every day. It could be from either the art or just the people that work here. It's a way to step out of your comfort zone. I think down the road the Explorers Program will help me understand and really want to be more social and help others. It's showing me how easy it is to do things that you're not comfortable with. The program really helps you learn to work with others and be able to bond with others and build relationships with not only Explorers, but also with the adults who work here. To be an Explorer to me means to be a reliable, understanding, and helpful person to the world. I enjoy the Explorer Program and recommend others to join.

# SUMAYAH ORPHELIA

## CLASS OF 2025

My name is Sumayah Orphelia. I am a 9th grader, and I go to Science Park High School. I joined the Explorers program in October 2021. The Explorers program has given me a better idea of the work environment. My favorite part of the program has to be the people I work with; I feel like there are so many different personalities in the program that every day is entertaining.

Recently the most helpful workshop has been resume building and college searching. No matter where I am, there is no harm in having a solid resume, and it's nice to have an idea of where I want to be in the future. But, honestly, my favorite part of the Museum has to be the building itself. Even though I still sometimes get lost while I'm wandering around trying to find my way, I appreciate not only the art all around the museum, but also the architecture. To be an Explorer is to be open-minded and willing to try new things. It's to want to learn about different topics and to want to build a community. The Explorers program will forever influence how I move through life, from the workshops that teach me life skills all the way to the networking.





## RONALD PALMER

### CLASS OF 2025

Hi, my name is Ronald Palmer and I'm a Freshman at St. Benedict's Preparatory School. I joined the program in the beginning of November and have enjoyed it here ever since. I've only been here for a couple months and the people I have met through this program have been very kind and helpful.

The program has also helped me grow in many ways, for example public speaking. It is not something I lack, but something I want to get better at. My favorite part about being an Explorer is coming to the workshops. I like them because they are different from what I do on a regular basis. The workshop about investing was something that helped me. It gave me a reminder to spend less and save more. Another workshop was one about Taekwondo and it showed a different point of view of fighting. Instead of retaliating or making the scene bigger than it is, just defend yourself and leave the situation. The thing I like best about the Museum is the project that I'm working on right now. I enjoy it a lot because I am able to explore the galleries and pick 3-4 paintings of my choosing. When walking throughout the galleries I am able to take away something from the paintings that I pick. Being an Explorer is important because it gives me so many resources. Especially being a freshman, I can take a lot of things away from this program. When I finish this program as a senior, I think it will influence and benefit me in so many ways because of the things I have learned throughout my time in the program.



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