



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 18 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 Family  
and Youth Programs

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CLASS OF  
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# HANAAN ADENAIKE

## CLASS OF 2023

Hi! My name is Hanaan Adenaike. I am a senior at North Star Academy. I joined the Explorer's Program in Fall 2021. The many activities available at the Museum made it such an exhilarating experience for me. Being able to assist during community days and participating in trips with my peers has shaped me into a more open and optimistic individual. I have been able to learn about so many different cultures and ideals working as an Explorer. A memorable moment at the Museum for me was working during the Fiesta Latina Community Day, this was during Hispanic Heritage Month, and I was able to learn how to make salsa from scratch without any technology. This was such a refreshing lesson, and something I used in the future.

Being an Explorer means being someone who takes initiative and is open to try new things. Helping peers, attending events, setting up teen nights, and so many amazing experiences were gifted to me as an Explorer. I not only gained job experience and so many treasured memories, but I also gained the skills I need to really succeed in my life after high school and beyond.







# ISABELLA ALMEIDA

## CLASS OF 2023

Hello, my name is Isabella Almeida. I am a senior at Linden High School and an Explorer at The Newark Museum of Art. I joined and was interviewed by the program when I was a junior around November 2021. The Explorers Program has helped me in many ways; it has shaped my personal growth to be more outgoing and communicating towards others. I've learned to work with peers and do public speaking. This program has helped me with school projects and NJROTC (Navy Junior Reserves Officer Training Corps). What I like about the Explorers Program is the work environment. I consider it to be a safe and positive place where others can be themselves and comfortable. My favorite duties as an Explorer are being a helper for the little kids and working on hands-on activities. I prefer working during the summer because it is my favorite season and I feel that more people tend to come for the outdoor events.

The activities and workshops that have been most helpful are financial literacy and resume building. This was very helpful with handling money, college debt, how to spend money correctly, budgeting and opening a bank account. What I like best about the Museum is the community events where we learn about different types of cultures and a variety of performances. For me to be an Explorer means to help others, think ahead, and work as The Newark Museum of Art Explorers Program family.



# DE'TRAVIUS ELI BETHEA

## CLASS OF 2023

My name is De'Travius Eli Bethea, I am a senior at North Star Academy Washington Park and joined the Explorers in 2021 as a junior. This program gave me a community of people I could rely on and talk to. Although I was not an introvert, I was still awkward after the pandemic. The Museum, through community days and teen nights, helped me get out of my shell. These events required me to talk to people, which helped me find my voice. This has had such a positive effect on me that now I always look forward to the Teen Nights and community days where I can finally get a chance to talk to people. Whether it is giving them instructions or showing them the way to the event, I relish every social interaction I get. My two favorite events have been Fiesta Latina 2021(my first event), and Winter Wonderland 2022. The first one was amazing as I met all my future friends and I got to work on a Frida Kahlo flower mural, which still lives in the Explorer office to this day. The Winter Wonderland event was the most fun I have ever had at an Explorer event. It was incredibly energetic, and the dancing was phenomenal. The music was great as well. It was just a lot of fun. To me, being an Explorer means you are willing to help the community and learn about adult life. You must be willing to learn and help. That's why I love the volunteer hour system. You start to love what you're doing by helping and learning before earning money.







# AMAYA COLON

## CLASS OF 2023

Hi, my name is Amaya Star Colon and I attend County Prep High School. I started my journey with The Newark Museum of Art when I was five years old as a camper, then I became an Explorer in the program at 14 and the fact that I am going to be 18 in less than two months is insane. I have grown so much with this program. In terms of my anxieties with public speaking I've grown with that thanks to our workshops. We have also had financial literacy workshops which has helped with my spending. The Museum and the people in it will help push you to be great, even when you don't necessarily think you will be great.

Being an Explorer has been an amazing experience, one that can't be replicated at another place. Working in a Museum is a very interesting experience because it is entertaining. My duties as an Explorer vary and my favorite one is working with the kids during the summertime at camp. I love how diverse this Museum is and, to me, the Explorers Program means a lot and having to part with it this summer of 2023 will certainly be bittersweet. This job is certainly a creative one with an amazing group of people and that is my favorite thing about it.



# MARIA GONZALEZ

## CLASS OF 2023

Good day, my name is Maria Gonzalez, I am currently a senior at Science Park High School, and I joined the Explorers Program in 2021 during my junior year. Being a part of this program has helped me gain many life skills, as well as great opportunities while being able to grow as a person and have fun experiences. I was able to become more open minded to new ideas while being able to think outside the box and be creative. I have learned to come up with new and innovative ideas to help fix any issues we have encountered. Not only that but I was able to improve my public speaking skills and become more outgoing and social. The Explorers Program has helped me become more independent and has prepared me for the real world. I am now able to work through things more diligently and efficiently while putting my best effort forward. My favorite part about the program is the amazing fun opportunities we receive. We can go on different trips where we learn about new things and meet new people while we branch out to new experiences in life. I had the opportunity to go to a recording studio where I was pushed out of my comfort zone, to make my own recording on a cover of a song I really liked. Through these experiences we can learn new things, not only about the places themselves but about ourselves as individuals. The Explorers Program has allowed me to become the best version of myself. My favorite duties have been working our events and helping during camp/family programs where we can work with kids and bring families together by providing them with fun experiences and memories. Working as an Explorer has helped me with my work ethic in school by making new projects, presenting, and working with other people while putting all our ideas into one. Being an Explorer is an amazing opportunity and is something of great value as we can benefit from it in different ways and have many different experiences as well as memories. Overall, I was able to gain new skills that can help me in the future when applying to colleges, getting a new job, and branching out into new ideas and experiences.





## ASHLEY HERNANDEZ

CLASS OF 2023

Hi, my name is Ashley Hernandez, I attend Science Park High School and I joined the Explorers Program my freshman year in 2019. Before the program, I was a timid girl who was a team player and followed the crowd, but the program helped me get out of my comfort zone and become more outgoing and more of a leader. Throughout my experiences here at the Museum, I have had a lot of good moments and experiences and met people from diverse backgrounds. Working at a Museum may seem boring but here at The Newark Museum of Art, you always have something to do. One of my favorite things about the Explorers Program is how welcoming the Explorers are and the experience we create during teen nights for other youth. I love making teen nights because you get to plan the whole event with a few other Explorers, and you get an idea of what it's like to plan an event if you were to do it in the future. It gives you a different perspective of all the work that goes into planning an event and how much money is put in. Being a part of the program also gives you several opportunities to learn about life changing experiences, opportunities, and enhances your knowledge/skills for life. For example, we would have public speaking meetings where we would get tips on how to deal with the fear of public speaking and how to improve our public speech. In addition, we had trips to places like studios, art and science institutions, and college trips. As for the Museum, I enjoy the family programs and the first Saturdays of every month. There is always a new activity for children and a new presentation/show for families to watch. To be an Explorer means to set an example for future Explorers and bring my community together.



# STOKELY PALMER JR.

## CLASS OF 2023

My name is Stokely Palmer, I am a senior at Seton Hall Prep High School, and I joined the Explorers Program my freshman year of high school. Coming into this program I was very timid and soft spoken. I would tend to avoid any social interactions regarding the public. Additionally, I was very disorganized in planning. The program has helped me throughout almost all my aspects of life. Through giving tours and helping with community-based events I became very outspoken, and my social anxiety decreased. There are many different parts of the program that I enjoy, such as the meetings and projects, but I would have to say that my favorite part of the program are the trips. The reason is that it is an overall fun experience with a mixture of learning new things, bonding with other Explorers. My favorite duty as an Explorer is working the community days because I get to interact with people and gain new experiences with working in the public. Public speaking and tour project meetings have been most beneficial to me because I am able to be more social with my peers and more outspoken about several different topics. On the topic of the Museum, my favorite thing about it is the vast collection of pieces and sculptures that represent various cultures and lifestyles. Being an Explorer is much more than the title, it transforms your life and prepares you for future experiences. The experience with the Explorers Program will help me in the future by preparing myself for several different experiences and different interactions.





# JEREMIAH ROSA

CLASS OF 2023

Hello, my name is Jeremiah Rosa. I'm an Explorer at The Newark Museum of Art and I'm a senior. I currently attend KIPP: Newark Collegiate Academy. The Explorers Program has allowed me to develop and grow into the person I am today. I continue to strive to be the best person I can because I know I have potential. I've been an Explorer for about a year and a half and the experiences I have had here so far are phenomenal. One of the major highlights of the Museum are the teen nights, trips, and community days where we can come together to learn something new and have an enjoyable time. Over the course of my time at the Museum I've been able to collaborate with peers and grow more comfortable socially and persevere in my public speaking. My favorite part of The Newark Museum of Art Explorers Program experience is being able to be a part of the teen nights. For example, the Halloween event was very fun as well as the Summer Camp. The reason being is that during the Summer I was involved with helping the youth in setting up fun activities and aiding the teachers who were also in the Summer Program.





CLASS OF  
**2024**







# JAHNAH ALFRED

## CLASS OF 2024

My name is Jahnah Alfred. I'm a junior at Great Oaks Legacy Charter High School and joined the Explorers Program in late October. Being a part of this program has been so enjoyable and 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 struggle with on their own; for example, being in an environment with new people and socializing, building out a resume, public speaking, independence, 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 assigned projects or the event planning. The projects usually involve our interest while being educational. 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. While the event planning gives me a sense of responsibility and the skills of problem solving and organization. Being an Explorer to me means being a part of a larger community of people 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 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, building out resumes, public speaking, socializing, etc. The Explorers Program is a step into the future.



# OMATOLA AKINSIKU

## CLASS OF 2024

Hello, my name is Omotola Akinsiku. I am currently a junior enrolled at North Star Academy High School. Since October 2022, I've been interning at The Newark Museum of Art, where I've acquired valuable skills in operating within a professional setting and communicating effectively with colleagues. Through this program, I've been able to recognize my strengths and weaknesses, as well as develop my personal character. I appreciate the networking opportunities provided by the program, which have encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and establish my professional identity. As an Explorer, I enjoy participating in volunteer activities on weekends, especially in family programs. The financial literacy workshop has been particularly beneficial for me, equipping me with essential money management and budgeting skills applicable beyond college. I'm most drawn to the Museum's diverse atmosphere, creating an inclusive and welcoming environment. To me, being an Explorer means promoting inclusivity and educating others on topics beyond art. This internship has equipped me with the tools necessary to enhance my resume and work experience, enabling me to take on more challenging roles in the future.





# KOBI EZEOKOLI

## CLASS OF 2024

My name is Kobi Ezeokoli. I am currently a junior at Saint Peter's Preparatory School. I joined the program in October 2022. This was the beginning of a life altering experience. This program has done so much for my growth. Before I joined, I was a timid, quiet, and soft-spoken child. As I've worked through the program, I've been able to increase my sense of personal accountability while also developing my professionalism and general knowledge of the working world. Even though I am still in high school, this program has given me the tools I need to be more at ease and secure in my adult life. My fellow Explorers are competent and ambitious. Ms. Jessica Nuñez, strikes the perfect mix between strictness and leniency. The adult staff members make the Museum feel like a second home and make me feel both on task and at ease at work. Some of the various opportunities we've been given so far are college tours, public speaking, and resume building workshops, as well as visiting a professional photo studio.

Community days are my favorite Explorer responsibilities, because I can directly assist residents of Newark of various ages and backgrounds. I feel more a part of my community when I am assisting others, and I enjoy contributing to the overall improvement of the town. The Museum has truly been a gift to me. Before this program, I would do nothing productive with my Tuesdays and Thursdays. Only 5 months in, I am truly surprised at the progress I've made as a person as well as the progress I am still going to make.



# STACY FOLAS

## CLASS OF 2024

Hi, my name is Stacy Folas. I'm a Junior at West Orange High School and I joined the Explorers Program in 2021. This program has helped me grow in several ways, especially in my independence and time management skills. Having to come to my internship on time, because I know I have responsibilities at the Museum I need to take care of, has made me more responsible and independent by making it my priority to come on time and communicate when I cannot do so. The best thing about this program would be my internship working with Family Programs on weekends, because I enjoy working with children and helping them with creative projects. The most helpful workshops in the Explorers Program have been the financial literacy classes because now that I'm making money, I want to ensure I'm saving and spending it appropriately. To me, being an Explorer means trying new things, working with innovative people, and making sure that people who come to the Museum feel as welcomed to this community as I do.







## **RABBY ISLAM**

**CLASS OF 2024**

My name is Rabby Islam. I am currently a junior at Science Park High School. During the summer of 2022, I joined the Explorers Program. Reflecting on the past couple months that I have been a part of the program, I have grown so much as a person. This program taught me that I can work with others to help the community. My favorite activity in the program is working the teen nights. While managing my own teen night, I learned so much. The Museum has also prepared me for the future by teaching me how to build my resume. The other roles I have in the Museum is interning with Ms. Fran for family programs. Working with little kids is a challenge and takes patience but it pays off. I have developed public speaking and social skills through my time at the Museum. Moreover, I had the privilege of going on trips with my fellow Explorers. We went to different colleges such as Rutgers New Brunswick and Princeton. These college trips opened my eyes to choosing the college of my future and what I need to do to get in. Other trips we went to include Harlem. I learned about the history and significance of the different sights in Harlem. In essence, the Museum provided me with so much and I am truly grateful. I love my boss, coworkers, other educators, and all the fun activities and trips offered.



# ZAKAI LASSITER

## CLASS OF 2024

Hi, my name is Zakai Lassiter, and I am a junior at Newark Collegiate Academy class of 2024. I joined the Explorers Program when I was a freshman in high school. The reason I wanted to join the Explorers Program was because I was formerly a camper. When I was a camper, I adored the Explorers because they were like older siblings helping me with projects or the dos and don'ts of camp. Later, I found out that the Explorers don't only assist teachers during the camp, but they do a whole lot more. I found out that Explorers go on college tours, go on educational trips, event plan, event manage, and much more. I love this program. I met many friends and new people in this workplace. This program also prepares us for the professional workspace, for example, different forms of professional etiquette, practicing our public speaking, touring, and being in professional environments. I recommend this program to up and coming high school students, because this program builds new friendships and new experiences. I also learned that we could earn a scholarship when we are seniors at the end of the program. Overall, this program has been a very fun and educational experience and I hope the program will continue to get even better.





A portrait of Evelyn Mitchell, a young Black woman with dark dreadlocks, wearing clear-framed glasses and a mustard-colored sweater with white horizontal stripes. She is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera against a plain, light-colored background.

## EVELYN MITCHELL

### CLASS OF 2024

My name is Evelyn Mitchell. I'm homeschooled and I joined the Explorer Program because I wanted a job but also because it seemed like a good way to meet new people and have new experiences. The program has helped me get better with being around other kids my age but just be better in social situations. The program has also helped me with my public speaking. I'm still learning how to get better but I'm sure with more practice it will be even better. My favorite part of the program is the trips that we get to go on like the Museum of the Moving Image, and the college tours.

My favorite duties are the different internships we can do. Right now, I'm in curatorial and I get to help the curators do research on different pieces of art in the collection. Like I said, the best workshops have been the public speaking and the financial literacy classes. The financial literacy classes have helped me especially since I'm about to go off to college and I don't want to have a lot of loans that are going to take me forever to pay off. The best part of the Museum to me is the fact that it's an art museum. I've never been in a space that I'm excited to learn about art, but here I am. It means a lot to me that I can have the experience of being an Explorer. This experience has made me grow in responsibility because I want to be the best version of me I possibly can.



# JUSTIN MURRAY

## CLASS OF 2024

My name is Justin Murray. I attend North Star Academy Washington Park High School. I joined the Explorers Program at the beginning of the school year in October. The program helped me grow because it taught me how to work in an environment with people, I'm not familiar with. Additionally, it also helps me grow by improving my public speaking skills and getting to know some wonderful Explorers in the program who are now great friends of mine. The activities that have been most helpful to me in the program was working the creative play internship. The Creative play internship involved me teaching kids arts and crafts through activities such as building kaleidoscopes and slime. The best thing about working at the Museum is making new friends and meeting new people from different places, backgrounds, and cultures. Another thing I like about working at the Museum is seeing the different art pieces made by other artists and it makes me have an even better respect and appreciation for the arts and artists. Being an Explorer means to be inspirational, a model employee, and a hard worker. This experience will influence my future because it will show that I have an amazing work ethic and that I'm willing to take on any difficult tasks put in front of me. As time goes on, I hope to continue and keep up the hard work as an Explorer and do even better as a senior.





# **SIDRATULMUNTAHA NURUDEEN-ALLI**

**CLASS OF 2024**

My name is Sidra Alli. I began participating in the Explorer Program in December 2022 and currently attend North Star Academy Lincoln Park High School. The Explorers Program has significantly helped me with interacting with others and having the skill of learning to plan an event. It allows me to prepare myself for when I get a job in the real world and learning how to not just do things quickly but efficiently. My favorite thing to do as an Explorer is to help set up the different events. I adore how I always get pushed to speak louder because I know that you cannot communicate with others if you don't speak loud enough. My favorite thing about the program is that we're offered different internships around the Museum like accounting and photography, that can help you develop skills in those designated areas and offer a lot of help with the college process. I love that the Museum offers free events that people can come and enjoy themselves because there aren't many places that offer that. The experiences that I'm getting from the Explorers Program will benefit me in the future because it will help me gain public speaking skills, planning skills, interacting with others, a glimpse into adult and work life which will give me a head start in life.



# ANDREW ONAIYEKAN

## CLASS OF 2024

My name is Andrew Onaiyekan, I attend Newark Collegiate High School as a Junior, I joined the Explorers Program in October. The Museum has created so many opportunities for me as a high schooler, it has helped me grow in multiple areas of my life like public speaking and working in a professional setting. My favorite activities to do in the Museum are mostly the icebreaker activities where we get to converse and meet new people in different work areas to help us prepare for the future. The one thing that has been most helpful to me is my internship. The family programs internship has helped me learn how to work in a professional setting, learn how to work better with kids and expand my artistic creativity overall. What I like best about the Museum is the fact that I get to work with people also in general and have people to relate to and we can build each other up. To be an Explorer to me is to be able to find yourself, to work hard and learn to be professional, to discover your passions and future crafts. I'm always going to be grateful to be blessed to work somewhere that has my best interests at heart, to help me succeed in life and isn't just a part-time job. There are so many opportunities that come with being an Explorer, including new experiences, meeting new people, learning about the Museum and its artifacts, and even the possibility for a scholarship. I cannot think of a better place to be working at right now.







# EMMA RAUGHLEY

## CLASS OF 2024

Hello, my name is Emma Raughley I'm in my junior year and I'm homeschooled, and I joined the Explorers Program in the fall of 2022. One of the many ways this program has helped me grow and learn is by giving me a lot of real job and workplace experience, which includes working different internships within the Museum to expand my knowledge of how things work at the Museum. I'd say that the thing I liked best about the program is the opportunities it offers to be a bigger part of the community I live and work in.

My favorite job as an Explorer was being on a team and getting to plan our very own event with the Museum, to provide a safe space for local teens. Along with many other things, the Explorers Program offers free workshops for its interns, to help us be better prepared for the future. The workshop I benefited from the most was the financial literacy and investing workshops, which talked about smart budgeting and how college loans work as well as smart investing. I enjoy all our workshops, but I think those were the most useful for me and my future. The part I like best about the Museum itself is that it's an art Museum. It's honestly just amazing for me because I am an aspiring artist myself. To me being an Explorer means that I'm here to learn, learn as much as possible while being as grateful and helpful as possible. In the future I think this job will help me a lot as an artist and as a young person trying to figure out my future.



# JEILENZ SAINT-SULNE

## CLASS OF 2024

My name is Jeilenz Saint-Sulne and I'm a 11th grader who attends Great Oaks Legacy Charter High School. I joined the Museum as a sophomore in 2021. I heard about the Explorers Program through my older sister who was also a former explorer. Being an Explorer paved the way for me to be able to branch out, meet new people and learn more about myself. My confidence rose, giving me more chances to take opportunities head on. My ability to manage time has always been wishy washy. Learning to take responsibility and be accountable has contributed to my preparation for life after high school.

I always admired the community that was already in place when I first started working at the Museum. My favorite part of being an Explorer was helping around the summer camp. Watching the younger kids participate in various activities, build new relationships and overall, just being kids was wholesome to me. I wish I could've gone when I was younger. Every year the juniors split off into groups and each plan a different event for a time in the year. My team and I came up with a Valentine Day themed silent disco party. Working on that event made me realize the importance of preparation for future endeavors. Even something as small as meeting a deadline can weigh in on your performance which makes time management so much more important. My time as an Explorer will certainly not be forgotten as it has shaped me into the young man I am today.





## CAMILA TORRES

CLASS OF 2024

My name is Camila Torres. I am currently a junior at Science Park High School. I joined the Explorers Program in the late summer of 2022. The Newark Museum of Art Explorers Program is a college preparatory program that conducts workshops, allows Explorers to work in internships, volunteer at community days, create museum projects, and go on trips. Not only are the activities you do from day to day engaging, informative, and fun because of your co-workers, but you get paid! Back in the day, I only received advice and professional experience working as a server or earned money by begging my parents. Now, even though it has been half a year, I have become a more mature, well-rounded individual because of the Museum. For example, the past few workshops have been about financial literacy. Even though it is possible to learn online or through people you know, learning from financial experts through college-like lectures is life-changing. I learned about credit, debit, student debt, student loans, and investing. By having these experts come teach me, I feel more enlightened about the world of finance. Because of the Museum, I am going to aim for a full-ride scholarship to college. If possible, I would love to work at a museum during college because working here never feels lonely or particularly stressful. The community that comes to The Newark Museum of Art are all kind, open-minded people who want to dabble in the appreciation of the fine arts and histories our galleries have to offer. The Newark Museum of Art has changed my life for the better, and I am forever in debt to all it has and will continue to offer me.



# ANDERSON UMANZOR

## CLASS OF 2024

My name is Anderson Umanzor, and I am currently enrolled at Science Park High School. In October of 2022, I joined the Explorers program, and it has been an amazing experience. This program has allowed me to learn about art, culture, and life in a fun and engaging way. Through the program, I have developed my creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking skills, which have helped me grow as an individual. As an Explorer, I have learned to manage my time better, and I make the most out of every opportunity presented to me. My favorite activity as an Explorer is touring different places, from visiting Ivy League schools to exploring the Museum of Moving Image in New York. These tours have helped me learn about my future possibilities, as well as the broadness of what's considered art. The workshops offered by the Explorers Program have been very helpful in my personal and professional life. The Financial Literacy workshop has been my favorite so far. I learned how to manage my finances and make informed decisions regarding college expenses. It has made me more conscious of the importance of money and the opportunities it can create. My favorite thing about the Museum is the sense of community I have found among my fellow Explorers. Since joining the program, I have become closer to people I would have never met otherwise. We share similar interests, and my social skills have improved a lot. They are smart and goal-driven individuals who inspire me to be better. Being an Explorer means being curious, open-minded, and willing to learn. It means respecting different cultures and art forms and appreciating their beauty and significance. This experience has influenced my future, as it has sparked my interest in exploring the world and all it has to offer. It has helped me decide on a dream to work towards.







CLASS OF  
**2025**







# NMESOMACHUKWU AGHAJI

## CLASS OF 2025

My name is Nmesomachukwu Aghaji, I go to Great Oaks High School, and I joined the Explorers Program in October of 2021. Here in the Museum, I've been given a unique job experience that many kids my age do not have. Being a part of this program has allowed me to improve my social skills by putting me in new situations where I had to interact with my co-workers, Museum guests, and other visitors. I also get to learn more about managing my finances. I'm given first-hand information about life after high school, whether its people coming in to talk to us or us visiting colleges. During my time as an Explorer, I've also been able to visit fun educational places, like museums and more. Being an Explorer has also allowed me to see art in a new and exciting way, that now I can even say that I love art. Because of this program I feel confident and prepared for life after high school. One of my favorite duties as an Explorer is being able to work with younger kids in the Museum's annual summer camp. I also love being able to work during the Museum's community days. I think I love this aspect of the Museum because it shows me that you should give back and support the people who've helped you grow. Finally, to be an Explorer means that when you make mistakes, you're willing to learn from them, to support your coworkers, and to not be afraid to try new things, even when they scare you.



# AASHI BHANDARI

## CLASS OF 2025

My name is Aashi Bhandari and I'm originally from Nutley, New Jersey. I am currently a sophomore at Nutley High School, and I started my job at the Museum in the fall of 2022. Since joining the program, I've been exposed to a variety of situations that have promoted my independence as a teenager and advocated for my education. As an Explorer, I've continuously been given a sense of freedom when interacting with the Museum staff, community, and the environment itself. As I navigate a world that requires an excessive amount of independence post-school, the Museum has aided in my ability to slowly start preparing for this. Additionally, I've enjoyed the open-minded space in the office where Explorers are respectful, appreciative, and communicative with their coworkers. The office itself is a safe space that I admire and value because of how it welcomes creativity and passion. As an Explorer, my favorite days are the community events where we are asked to interact with more than just our immediate peers. Whether it be community days or teen nights, I cherish these experiences because they will help me become the social and grateful person I strive to be. Accordingly, the trips, workshops, and endless college advice all have been imperative for my success in the future. Something I like best about the Museum is that it provides us with various opportunities that foster success. Learning about proper public speaking techniques along with financial success and maintenance has helped me prepare myself for the outside world by showing me concepts I would have otherwise been blind to. To me, being an Explorer means being a caring, friendly, and appreciative human that works to improve themselves, along with their peers and community.







# MONICA CRUZ

## CLASS OF 2025

My name is Monica Cruz. I am 15 years old. I live in Bloomfield, NJ and attend school at St. Benedict's Preparatory school. I joined the program in the fall of 2022. My sister, Leah Cruz, was a part of the program as well, which is how I found out about it. I am a young woman who loves to be independent, so being in this program allows me to be independent at a young age. It teaches me how to be responsible so that I am prepared for my future careers. It's an open window for many opportunities to learn about different subjects they may not touch up on in school. Such as financial literacy, self-defense, public speaking, and many more. One of my many favorite activities as an Explorer are the community days in which we spend the day helping and engaging with the community. Also, my internship is an amazing opportunity to learn how to accomplish things you may never see yourself doing, it pushes you in the most positive direction in life. The program teaches life skills/tips that you may never learn from someone else. It prepares you on how to manage money and continues to educate teenagers like me.



# DARIION DANIELS

## CLASS OF 2025

Hello, my name is Dariion Daniels, and I go to NorthStar Academy Washington Park High School. I joined the Explorers Program only a few months ago in October 2022. During my time as an Explorer, I have gotten the chance to handle the responsibility of having an afterschool job. This helps with my time management. My favorite part of the program is perhaps the fact we get to host teen nights, because I think it's a cool idea to have an event for teenagers planned and hosted by teenagers. The events have, so far, been successful, fun, and I believe the guests also enjoyed themselves. My favorite duty as an Explorer is probably setting up events. Of all the workshops, financial literacy will be the longest lasting, because it teaches skills that I will employ for the rest of my life. I like the way the Museum is organized. To me being an Explorer means going to the Museum after school to relax. I only get to experience my teenage years once, and I believe the Explorers Program will help me make the most of it.







## **MOBOLUWADURO FOLA-AKINTOLA**

### **CLASS OF 2025**

Hi! My name is Moboluwaduro. I'm in the 10th grade at Washington Park High School, North Star Academy. I joined the program in October 2021. This program has pushed me to manage my time, as I must juggle the program and other extracurricular activities. I enjoy the program because it gives me a chance to see new things and learn more about Museums around America. I also enjoy walking through the galleries because it's like seeing history come alive. Helpful activities are college preparation activities and chances for public speaking. As an Explorer, I feel like a diplomat, learning about other's situation while teaching them about mine. I am grateful for this experience and hopefully as I age, I can give back to my community and to The Newark Museum of Art in the same way this program has given back to me.



# NASIR GLOVER

## CLASS OF 2025

My name is Nasir Glover and I attend Donald M. Payne Sr. School of Technology in Newark, New Jersey. I joined the Explorers Program my freshman year and I've been going continuously for a little over a year now. I first found out about the Explorers Program from my older sister, Sarae. She talked about it with so much passion and light in her eyes, I had to see it for myself. Throughout my time in the Explorers Program, I have grown as a person and changed for the better. The Museum has helped me grow into a more social and approachable person and has really gotten me out of my shell. I grew up being a very introverted and non-outgoing person, but the Museum and its various activities opened my eyes and brought change into my life. My favorite aspect about the program is the frequent trips the Explorers go on. These trips are always interesting, informative, and fun. My favorite task as an Explorer is helping my fellow explorers and the public when they come into the Museum. The different workshops the Museum has to offer have helped me in many ways due to their real-life applicable situations like the financial literacy workshops. That class has helped me save and manage money more and I'm very grateful for the opportunity and knowledge the workshop has brought me. To be an Explorer means to be a role model and an independent young adult. I think the Museum will teach me to manage my time well and be more independent as a young professional going forward.







## AYLIANA HERNANDEZ

### CLASS OF 2025

Hi, my name is Ayliana Hernandez. I go to Donald M. Payne Sr. School of Technology. I joined the Explorers Program this year and all I have had are amazing experiences. This program has helped me grow in many ways. It has taught me to communicate better, it has taught me to be outgoing and social towards the public, and it has taught me how networking with others can give you the opportunity to go places. It has taught me to communicate better because anytime Ms. Jess needs Explorers to work on the weekends we need to email back in a timely manner, professionally, and at reasonable times. It has also taught me to be more social and outgoing towards the public because on the community days you need to be very social with the public, you could be helping with the MakerSpace activities and need to interact with the public to see if they need help or have any questions. It has also taught me how networking has the opportunity to take you places and give you amazing opportunities because when we visited the Quad Studios during our historical trip to Harlem some Explorers were actually able to record



# KAMILL HICKS

## CLASS OF 2025

Hi, my name is Kamill Hicks, and I joined the Explorers Program in 2021. I go to Great Oaks Legacy Charter School. When I started the Explorers Program, I was always nervous, shy, and didn't really want to come here. Now that I've gone through a year and a half, I have found it easier for me to be social and talk in front of crowds. I really enjoy what we do here in the Explorers Program. We have teen nights where teens come together for themed events and have fun. And we do themed community days where people from all around New Jersey come in and do small art projects and learn about the topic the community day is about. We also do events for the Explorers like when we do paintings or small teambuilding days. I also worked at the summer camp where I interacted with the kids and learned how to cooperate with other youth. My public speaking has improved gradually and the more I come here the more comfortable I become when talking to strangers. It's a fun experience and I enjoy being here and I feel like every teen should participate in programs like this. The things I experience here will benefit me for the rest of my life. The people here are very nice and easy to talk to. I don't think I've had a bad experience here yet. We also go on trips to different museums, colleges, and other fun places around the world. We also do projects throughout the year on art pieces here at the Museum that we have to present at the graduation.







# MAURICE HOUSTON

## CLASS OF 2025

My name is Maurice Houston. I am currently a high school sophomore attending North Star Academy, Washington Park High School. I joined the program in October of 2022. This program has helped me grow in numerous ways. Through the structure of the program, I have been able to develop my personal responsibility and become more professional and more well versed in the professional world overall. Although I am still in high school, this program has enabled me to feel more confident and comfortable with my life as an adult. The things I like best about the program are the people. My coworkers are ambitious and professional. The adult staff are all very experienced and welcoming and make the Museum feel like a second home, especially my boss Ms. Jessica Nuñez who has a good balance of strictness and leniency that makes me feel both on task and comfortable at work.

My favorite duties as an Explorer are community days. During community days I feel like I am more involved in the environment around me as I can directly help with people from Newark, of all ages and backgrounds. I'm usually doing things that involve helping people, mostly kids, with arts and crafts. I feel more connected to the visitors, by helping them. I feel like I am helping enrich the overall community experience. The activities or workshops that have been most helpful to me is my tours internship. Tours involves planning a tour of four pieces and connecting them to convey a theme and present it to the public on a designated day. Doing this tour has prepared me to be more outgoing and more well-spoken.



# KAYRELIN LIRANZO

## CLASS OF 2025

My name is Kayrelin Liranzo and I'm a sophomore at Donald M. Payne Tech. I joined the Explorer Program in September 2022. This program has helped me improve in ways schools and other extracurriculars cannot. It has helped with my social skills, working collaboratively, and working with media, cameras etc. When it comes to the things I've liked the most about the program, I'd say I enjoy being able to work with different people every day. I also like the atmosphere we work in; everyone is so welcoming and nice to work with. As an Explorer my favorite assignment has been capturing images of families and working with family programs, I also enjoy being able to edit the videos for the nmoateens Instagram page.

The activities or workshops that have been the most helpful to me in school, work, and social life I'd say must be the financial literacy workshops. The financial literacy workshops have helped me in all aspects, because they help me learn about saving, different types of credits, college, and important things to know when it comes to transitioning into adult life. I love everything about the Museum but the things I like most are the people that make this Museum so diverse. Being an Explorer means you are a well-rounded, outspoken, hardworking individual that is devoted to helping people, with this experience I believe it will influence my future by opening new passages. This program can help me network myself and help me get higher successes from the experience gained here. I really enjoy this experience and the environment I work in. I'm glad I was able to become an Explorer!







## TEMIDAYO OGUNDARE

### CLASS OF 2025

Hi, my name is Temidayo Ogundare. I am in the 10th grade. I attend Science Park High. I joined the Explorers Program in fall of 2022. So far, I have loved the community at the Museum. I haven't come across a single person who didn't have a smile on their face or was in a bad mood. My favorite duties would probably be the interactive stuff. Like the planetarium, working with kids and helping educators. The internship that has been the most helpful to me was the Planetarium. Not only was it informative and interactive, but I developed a new interest in the Planetarium. I've gotten to meet new people and form new connections. To me being an explorer means exploring a new environment to further who you are and your future. In terms of social life, I've acquainted myself with Explorers rather than stay in a corner and talk to people I knew prior to the Museum. In my personal experience, I have become less shy and I'm more open to new things. If someone told me in October that I would be working in a Museum and creating tours I wouldn't have believed it. I think my experience at the Museum will enhance who I am as a person.



# SUMAYAH ORPHELIA

## CLASS OF 2025

My name is Sumayah Orphelia. I am a 10th grader, and I go to Science Park High School. I joined the Explorers program Fall of 2021. The Explorers Program has given me a better idea of what I would want to see in a work environment. My favorite part of the program is 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 financial literacy. No matter where I am, there is no harm in having a solid resume, and I believe financial literacy is a key skill needed in life. But, honestly, my favorite part of the Museum is the building itself. 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. Being an Explorer has aided in my professional development and discovery. The Explorers Program will forever influence how I move through life, from the workshops that teach me life skills all the way to networking.







# RONALD PALMER

## CLASS OF 2025

Hi, my name is Ronald Palmer, and I am a Sophomore at St. Benedict's Preparatory School. I found out about this program through coming to the Newark Museum Camp and I have been eager to join ever since. I joined this program as a freshman last year and have enjoyed being here ever since. This program has helped me grow in many ways such as public speaking, financial literacy, and more. I like the workshops the most. Although we haven't had that many this year, the ones I attended were very fun and interactive. One of the workshops that has been most helpful to me was the Financial Literacy meeting I attended a couple weeks ago. It helped me because it reminded me to focus on saving and ways to save and spend intelligently. I enjoy the teen nights the best, because I feel like I was giving back to the community by inviting kids to come in and have a good time. It means a lot to be an Explorer because for one I'm getting a source of income and at the same time learning important values that will benefit me in the future. This program will help me in the future because we work on college readiness, public speaking, and financial guidance. All these things will help me for the rest of high school as I transition into college. I am grateful for the opportunity I get to work and attend this program. Thank You!



# KASSY PATINO

## CLASS OF 2025

Hello! My name is Kassy Patino, and I am currently a sophomore at Morristown Beard School. I joined the Explorers Program in the fall of 2022. Joining the Explorers Program has helped me become more involved in my community and find my inner voice. Becoming an Explorer opened a lot of opportunities for me. By dedicating my time to come each week to the Museum, all of us Explorers worked hard to put together many different events such as community days and teen nights. My personal favorites were the teen nights. Being able to set gorgeous scenery with other Explorers and then seeing our hard work paying off, as Newark community members enjoyed their time in the Museum was a great pleasure. Through Museum projects, attending lectures, and receiving work-life advice, I learned many useful pieces of advice that will certainly help me in my future when I begin applying to colleges and start my transition to an adult.

To me, being an Explorer has been all about passion and opportunities. Meeting everyone at the program allowed me to open my social circle and gain many experiences that I wouldn't have had before. Not only this, but the professional expertise that I have learned will certainly benefit me in my future and allow me to have an advantage and always be a step ahead in life. I am thankful that I was given the opportunity to be part of this community of Explorers and to gain memories that I will cherish. I hope to be able to continue to provide to the Newark Community and have an amazing time with others in the Explorers Program in the following years!







## ZAÑA WOOTEN

### CLASS OF 2025

Hey, my name is Zaña Wooten. I am a sophomore at Marion P. Thomas Charter High School, and I joined the Explorers Program on my birthday in August 2022. And moreover, the first week I joined, I really did enjoy it. The Explorers Program opened my eyes more, about things I want and things I like. I loved how open everyone was. This Program really helped me with experiences and responsibilities. It also helped me with my social skills and my organization.

Being here really is such a benefit for me. Primarily because of the trips, I have been looking forward to college and the Explorers Program really pushed me and made me more interested to go. Being here and talking to new people every day, working for the community, helping people find out where to go, giving tours, and even asking people to fill out surveys, has made me more out-going. Being here makes me happy because all the people I have met really make my day. The Explorers Program makes me try harder at everything.





CLASS OF  
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# NICHOLAS BUSTAMANTE

## CLASS OF 2026

My name is Nicholas Bustamante and I'm currently a freshman at Science Park High School and a part of the Explorers Program. I joined the program during the 2022 year and honestly my experience here has been great. I was initially nervous as I was one of the younger kids and I wasn't sure how I'd fit in. If only I could go back in time and tell myself how wrong I'd be. The community and environment here is great. I was blown away by the fact that so many people from so many different schools could still have something in common. As a new Explorer, I'm still new to our duties and jobs, but I happily comply to do what is asked of me. The Museum itself is just an extremely enjoyable place to spend time after school.

Being an Explorer to me means that you are part of something bigger. I was able to socialize with people who have had completely different experiences and unique personalities while also being able to learn something new. A workshop I was fond of was the one with Shine Studio. There I was encouraged to have a fun time while learning about photography, portraiture, and being photographed. As I continue as an Explorer, I'll not only start to find my place but also discover who I am while experiencing new events that will stay with me for life.







## NAISHA SAINT-SULNE

CLASS OF 2026

My name is Naisha Saint-Sulne, I attend Science Park High School as a freshman. I joined the Explorers Program this school year and, so far, I'd like to think I have learned a lot. I must admit that at first, I found it very difficult to balance the Museum and my sports/after school activities. But over time, being a part of this Explorers Program has taught me how to balance things and to have better time management skills. Like most, we join the Museum for the job opportunity, but the learning experiences that come with it are impressive. I have learned so much and can't wait to learn more.

One of the things that I have learned that really helped was the financial literacy workshops. Although some of the things that were talked about didn't concern me due to my age—it helped me learn about topics I will use in the future. Not only that, but I was also able to tell my parents or other adults that I know information involving financial literacy just in case they didn't know. It means a lot to be able to be in this environment and learn new things that are beneficial for my future. Being able to experience this will probably prepare me for the future more than I know.





**The Newark Museum of art is proud to recognize the following funders who have supported our Class of 2023 Explorers from 2019 to the present.**

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