

# CollegeBound + SAINT PAUL

2023 COHORT

*Pathways for Every Child, Family and Future.*

## Ambassador Directory



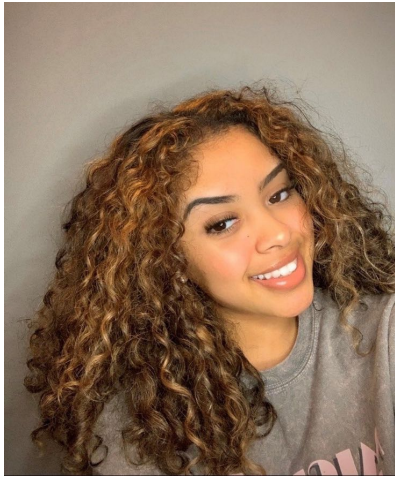
### Abdi Abdulkadir

Abdi Abdulkadir is one of our younger ambassadors at age 18. He is friendly and kind, with a self-described life goal of being successful! Abdi loves to try new foods, and a phrase he goes by is, "If life is not smiling at you, give it a good tickling."

### Alicia Lucio

Alicia Lucio values the academic resources in Saint Paul, including charter schools, Gateway to College, and Best Buy Tech Centers. Her favorite thing to explore is the outdoors, from scootering in the summer to snowshoeing in the winter! Alicia became an ambassador to interface with a broad and diverse network of people on a regular basis. She believes in education as a staple of an individual and wants to do anything she can to encourage it.



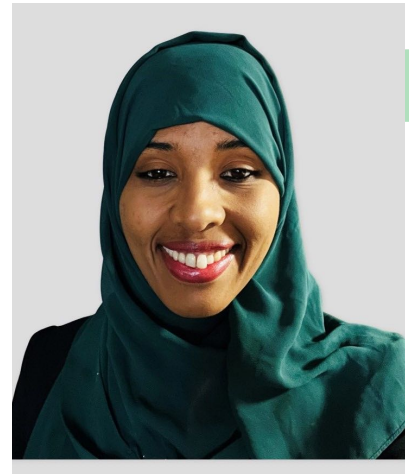


## Aliyah Hussein

Aliyah Hussein, 16, is also one of our youngest ambassadors! Her favorite Saint Paul restaurant is Café Latte and she enjoys travelling. Aliyah became an ambassador because of her love of social situations: she enjoys talking with people and can get along with anyone!

## Amira Kemal

Amira is one of our ambassadors who is a parent of a CollegeBound kid! Some of her favorite things to explore in Saint Paul are the Como Zoo, History Center, and Science Museum. She also thinks the Saint Paul Libraries are a great resource. Amira is excited to spread awareness about CollegeBound to her community.



## Ana Younker Zimmerman

Christiana Younker Zimmerman, who goes by Ana, was born in Haiti. She was adopted by two white moms and they moved to East Side Saint Paul in 2002. Some of her favorite places in the Cities include the Rondo Library and eating at Cossetta's. Ana values quality time with those she loves and engagement with others. She became an ambassador to work with people and help her community. In her free time, Ana is writing an autobiography, does craft projects, and reads.

## Anel Mendoza

Anel is a former Eastsider and is looking forward to connecting to Saint Paul residents as an Ambassador and is very passionate about connecting with the Latino community. Some of her favorite Saint Paul activities are walking on the high bridge and Harriet Island and eating pupusas at Manana.



## Ariel Mendoza

Ariel Mendoza is originally from the West Side, but currently lives in the Rondo neighborhood. As a returning ambassador, she chose to do a second year because of how much she enjoyed connecting with families last year! She wants all families to know what an amazing resource CollegeBound is for babies. Ariel enjoys taking her daughter to different parks and trails around Saint Paul so she can experience all the different seasons.



## Bao Yang

Bao Yang has connections to the East Side and Frogtown neighborhoods in Saint Paul. Her favorite resources are WIC, the Hmong American Partnership, and the Saint Paul Public School system. Her favorite restaurant is Bangkok Thai Deli, on University Avenue, because “they have the best Thai Food in Saint Paul!” Bao became a CollegeBound ambassador because she thinks it’s a great program that every eligible family should be a part of.







## Bella Mendoza

Bella Mendoza (pronounced Bay-ya) was born and raised in Westside Saint Paul. Her favorite restaurant quickly became Boca Chica's Taco House and her favorite store is El Burrito. As a child, Bella would walk to El Burrito for her grandmother or drive to Taco House with her mom to get food. Growing up, it was rare for her to see someone who completed college, which is part of why Bella chose to become an ambassador. She wants to help families start a college fund for their children through CollegeBound.

## Devina Moore

Growing up, Devina spent a lot of time in Rondo, Frogtown, and the Westside of Saint Paul. Devina admires the work of Wilder and SPPN as strong community resources. As an Ambassador, she is looking forward to meeting new people and sharing the resources with the families at the school she works at and encouraging young scholars.



## Fatima Abdulkadir

Fatima loves that there is something for everyone in Saint Paul, you can always find what you are looking for. She personally loves trying out different restaurants and ice cream shops, and especially Café Late. Fatima loves being an ambassador because CollegeBound sets kids up for success from the moment they are born and helps families save right away,

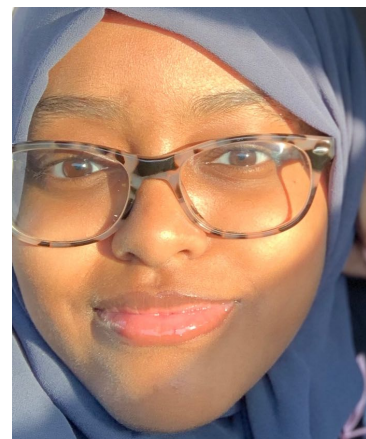


## Felecia Senti

Felecia Senti works with Think Small as the Outreach and Enrollment Coordinator with the Scholarship Department, sharing eligibility information and helping families find Parent Aware programs to enroll in. She also works with community agencies to promote Early Learning Scholarships for families in need. Felecia enjoys reading, exploring the great outdoors, finding great coffee shops, and baking cinnamon rolls for her wonderful family. She has a BS in Interdisciplinary Studies from Austin Peay State University.

## Hayat Kadir

Hayat Kadir is a recent grad from Central High School in Saint Paul. She works at the Science Museum and, in her free time, volunteers for the Rondo Library and the Animal Humane Society.



## Joshua Vang

Josh lives and works in downtown Saint Paul but also spent a lot of time in Frogtown. He loves using the light rail and Evie car share to get around. Josh loves exploring new places to eat and some of his favorites are, Kalsada, Sabrina's, eM que viet, Afro Deli, and Manana.

## Keshawn Williams

Keshawn heard about CollegeBound as a grandparent of a CollegeBound kid. Keshawn is a foster parent and is looking forward to giving back to her community as an ambassador. She is part of the Black Business Enterprise in Minnesota and is a professional face painter and owner of Keshawn Characters.



## Kindra McGee

Kindra McGee is a native of Little Rock, Arkansas, growing up in Chicago, IL and Compton, CA. Kindra learned at an early age she wanted to work in the medical field; she has been caring for family members since she was five years old. Today she works as a Perinatal Educator and Certified Medical Assistant continuing to care for people.



## Krissy Cook

Krissy Cook became an ambassador because she enjoys providing other people with opportunities. She has connections in the Frogtown and East Saint Paul neighborhoods and highly values the libraries, gyms, and overall community. Krissy doesn't necessarily have a single favorite place to go in Saint Paul; she's very spontaneous so however she's feeling in the moment will get her attention – she does LOVE to eat!







## Maria Soto

**Maria Soto is a special needs teacher assistant for Saint Paul Public Schools. She has three daughters and a son, as well as four dogs! She enjoys walking around the lake. Maria chose to return to being an ambassador in order to help in our community by providing information about different resources the City of Saint Paul has available.**

## Maureen Nelson

**Maureen is an active member of the Eastside neighborhood. Maureen and her family love spending time at the Saint Paul Public Libraries and engaging in all the activities put on by SPPS; she is also a parent to a CollegeBound kid! Maureen loves summer and spending time at the Saint Paul Farmer's Market and visiting parks to see local artists perform.**



## Munira Esmael

**Munira Esmael is from the Frogtown neighborhood in Saint Paul. She enjoys visiting the farmers market and Nina's Café, and values the utility of the libraries all around the city. Munira became an ambassador because she wanted to be an outreach person for her community.**

## Nyia Vang

Nyia works at a SPPS school on the Eastside of Saint Paul and is looking forward to connecting with the community about CollegeBound as an Ambassador. Her favorite Saint Paul resource is the libraries. Some of Nyia's favorite things in Saint Paul are Union Depot, Harriet Island, and Hmong Village.

## Rish Arnold

Rish's favorite resource in Saint Paul is her own organization, Fear None Conquer All. She is excited to be an ambassador so she can help bridge the gap for lower income communities to go to college and health black and brown communities form generational wealth. One of Rish's favorite things in Saint Paul is the Creators Space downtown which is a creative community space.



## Rita Shimeles

Rita grew up in North Minneapolis but now calls Como home. She is the proud parent of a CollegeBound child and is looking forward to meeting new people and helping others as an Ambassador. She loves going to her local YMCA and her family has a tradition of visiting Conny's every summer.



## Shawnte Allen

Shawnte's ties are to Frogtown and Eastside Saint Paul. She is a grandparent of a CollegeBound kid and is looking forward to giving back to the community. Shawnte enjoys the art and hiking Saint Paul offers.



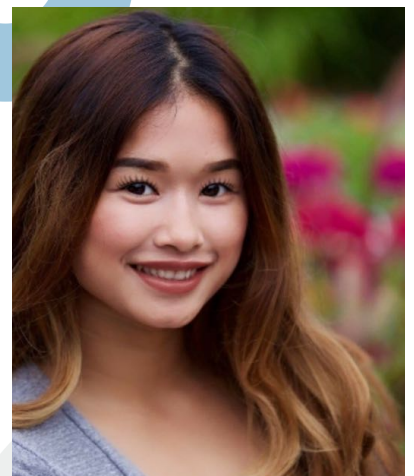
## Song Vang

Song Vang is currently in grad school at UMN studying social work as well as working as a Community Liaison Officer for the Saint Paul Police Department. She has a long-time commitment of advocating and helping families, and looks forward to creating more opportunities for children. With connections to the Eastside neighborhood, Song has wonderful memories of walking down Phalen Park and loves to eat at various restaurants including Hmong Village, Hickory Hut, and IPHO.



## Thaw Paw

Thaw Paw has connections to the East Side Saint Paul community and her favorite resource is the Saint Paul Public Library, because it has everything she needs! Her favorite thing to do in Saint Paul is explore nature and beautiful places around the city. Thaw is a returning ambassador; she chose to become an ambassador for a second year because she knows that CollegeBound is a good resource for her Karen community.





## Tracy Jones

Tracy Jones was born and raised in Saint Paul, between the Frogtown, Midway, and Central Village neighborhoods. She has worked with Ramsey County for over 25 years, mostly within corrections. In 2019, she transferred to social services, where she supervises Mother's First, working with pregnant and parenting women. Outside work, she's a season ticket holder for the Timberwolves and is missing in-person games!

## Wah Paw

Wah Paw is a returning ambassador from the East Side Saint Paul community. Her favorite resources in Saint Paul are the libraries and food shelf, as hubs to access more resources. Wah chose to become an ambassador because CollegeBound similarly acts as a hub, connecting many communities. She likes shopping and exploring the mall!



## Yasmin Muridi

Yasmin is connected to the Eastside of Saint Paul and enjoys being an Ambassador because she likes listening and connecting with parents and highlighting local resources. Yasmin's favorite resource in Saint Paul is our great public library system! She also loves to explore and travel when possible.