Craig Williams
Senior Vice President of The Coca-Cola Company & 
President, The McDonald’s Division Worldwide

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“I am a big believer that exposure to new possibilities can be a powerful catalyst for people,” said Craig Williams, Senior Vice President of The Coca-Cola Company and President, The McDonald’s Division Worldwide. As just a young student still in high school, Craig is thankful for INROADS having been that catalyst in his life.

While attending Normandy Senior High in St. Louis, Missouri, Craig stumbled upon INROADS, an organization he found would change his mindset forever. He applied for an INROADS Summer Experience as a high school student and he got the opportunity to participate in classes at the University of Missouri campus. He described his experience as eye-opening because of a curriculum that consisted of different studies and diverse classes.

Being on a college campus at that time was awesome to Craig for a few different reasons. For starters, as a junior in high school it was a huge deal to be attending classes on a college campus. “It helped me to be a bit more grown-up because I was now in a college versus high school environment. It gave me a boost in self-confidence. Spending time on a college campus then helped me to envision being successful in a college environment later on,” he said.

Prior to his encounter with INROADS, Craig was a student attending his classes and getting good grades, but he didn’t fully know what he wanted to be when he grew up and he wasn’t taking the idea of attending college seriously. He credits INROADS and the classes he took that summer as the factor that pushed him to envision what he could be in his next phase of life — which ultimately was going to college. “I will never forget the experience I had because it made me much more ambitious about what I wanted to do moving forward; I was able to see beyond my circumstances, which at the time, were pretty meager.”

Later, Craig went on to attend Benedict College where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Physics. Right out of college, he chose to join the Navy where he worked towards earning his engineering certification in Nuclear Propulsion. Today, Craig is Senior Vice President of The Coca-Cola Company and President, The McDonald’s Division Worldwide.

Even now, years after being a part of INROADS summer program, he thanks the organization for playing a significant role in his professional life. “INROADS was the first thing to really plant a seed of greater opportunity into my head,” and that seed was an incredible future with amazing success both personally and professionally. He continues to apply the lessons he learned.

Craig encourages young students to use INROADS to their advantage because even a summer with INROADS can make an impactful difference in determining the path your life will take. He believes that each person needs to first have the drive and determination themselves, but INROADS has the ability to open doors that sometimes cannot be opened by individual effort alone.