



# THE REFILL JACKSON INITIATIVE

*Working Toward a Healthier, Wealthier Jackson for Everyone*



Cohort 17 members and Refill alums building Mel's Corner, a small park at Refill dedicated to Mel Groves, RJJ alumnus of Cohort 5.

Dear Caitlin,

As my dad often says this time of year, it's a "scorcha" (New England for scorcher) out there! Hope this newsletter finds you staying cool, with power, and hopefully looking forward to some summer relaxing.

As always, we are busy at Refill - we celebrated Cohort 17's graduation on June 16th, our first class with 100% retention. Each member worked diligently toward their best next step, and persevered through challenges to complete the program. We are so proud of our graduates, and would love to see a young person in your life in Cohort 18, which starts on Tuesday, July 18! Interested 18-24 year olds can always apply at <https://refilljackson.org/apply/>. We are scheduling interviews now!

It's been such a pleasure to host the community at Friday Forum and Saturday Breakfast Club for the past few months. Nicole McNamee and Jonathan Lee do an excellent job bringing speakers on topics of immediate interest to Jacksonians, and a friendly venue for networking, asking questions, and learning about our neighbors' concerns. I hope you can join us one Friday morning at 9 am at Refill - we bring the coffee if you bring the conversation!

In the past few months, I've been so grateful to participate in and to receive the support of the Jackson community on multiple occasions. Refill Jackson received support from St. Andrew's Cathedral, and I had the pleasure of speaking to congregation members about the young people we serve. We have received financial support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and from United Way of the Capital Area most recently, which will help us continue and expand our work. We are pleased to continue our work building the career pipeline for Jackson's young adults with AccelerateMS, the MS Department of Health, Central Mississippi Planning and Development District, and the MS Department of Human Services. And I was honored to speak with Marshall Ramsey this past week on Mississippi Stories (link below). Reconnecting our members with the Jackson community is so crucial to the sustainability of their careers and futures; we are always deeply grateful for our partnerships with local and state organizations, as well as the many individual volunteers, supporters, and champions who share in our mission of building a healthier, wealthier Jackson for everyone.

With gratitude,  
Caitlin Brooking  
President and CEO  
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## Refill Jackson Merch Fundraiser

Do you want to look this cool AND support Refill Jackson?? For one more week only, you can purchase your own RJJ short- or long-sleeve t-shirt, or a hoodie (for a future cold time of course), through our pop-up fundraiser shop!

Through Friday, July 7th, proceeds from sales of merchandise on our Lucid Ink Printing online shop directly benefit Refill Jackson. These limited edition items are usually only available to members, so make sure you scoop these up ASAP!

Thanks to [Lucid Ink Printing](#) for setting up the shop!

Shop Now



## Mel's Corner

Refill Jackson members, alumni, staff, and friends came together on Sunday, June 10 to build a small park on our site in memory of RJJ Cohort 5 alumnus Mel Groves. The project was led by Nakira Willis, also an alum from Cohort 5, in memory of Mel, who was killed by gun violence in October 2021. Approximately 30 volunteers came out for 4 hours to build park benches and planters, paint a mural, and prepare for the installation of a basketball hoop on a slab adjacent to the Refill building. The spot was a favorite resting place for Mel while he was a member, with shady trees and a small bench to step away to during breaks. The project was made possible by a volunteer engagement mini-grant from [Volunteer Mississippi](#), the state agency for volunteerism. It was truly a pleasure to gather together with our Refill family, remember Mel, and honor his memory with a beautiful space that both RJJ and community members can enjoy.

## Alumni Spotlight: Caleb Clark

Big congratulations are due to Refill alum Caleb Clark, Cohort 12, who graduated in June from [Mississippi Coding Academies](#), an 11-month training that prepares students to succeed in the tech industry. Caleb also received the Richard Sun Spirit Award for best exemplifying the spirit of Mississippi Coding Academies co-founder, Richard A. Sun. We are so proud of Caleb and can't wait to see what he accomplishes next!



## Mississippi Stories with Marshall Ramsey

Refill Jackson Initiative CEO Caitlin Brooking spoke with Marshall Ramsey on June 22, 2023 about the work of Refill Jackson, and what it takes to spark the motivation and dreaming necessary for disconnected young people to embark on a brighter future.



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