

## WMCAT Partnership Brings Student Designs to Black History Month Collection

This year, we grew our partnership with the [West Michigan Center for Arts + Technology](#) (WMCAT) to feature two designs for our limited-edition apparel collection celebrating Black History Month.

Our partnership provides Black teen artists at WMCAT the opportunity to collaborate with an artist mentor to create designs that represent their own unique perspectives on Black History Month. This year, Grand Rapids high schoolers Minni Peters and Anala Millbrooks worked closely with mentor Jalexia Stoutmyre, a professional artist and teaching artist at WMCAT, to bring their designs to life.

After growing our partnership with WMCAT in 2021 to include one T-shirt design by one of the program's students and an artist instructor, we decided to expand the program this year to feature two designs— a T-Shirt and a sweatshirt.

"I feel like I'm making an impact, especially on the BIPOC youth," Jalexia said of what it means to her to design products that will be seen and worn by people across the Midwest. "One of the reasons why I love art is the activism it can provide while also uplifting a community."

The T-Shirt design features candy hearts with affirmations, including: "luv ur curls, black is powerful, black is beautiful, black love, honor black history."

"I hope those wearing the shirts feel appreciated for everything they are, from their strong side to their soft side," shared Jalexia. "Far too often being Black is synonymous with fearless, or strong, which it very well is, but it's deeper than that. So, this was a design to show appreciation during Black History Month, appreciation for traits that sometimes go unnoticed."

The second design is on a sweatshirt and features a timeline of Black history achievements down the sleeve. Jalexia intends for the piece to start conversations and educate people on lesser-known accomplishments throughout Black history.

"I hope those wearing the timeline hoodies feel like they learned something new about Black history," she said.

All 6,000 T-shirts and sweatshirts were printed through Ambrose at WMCAT, WMCAT's screen printing and social enterprise business, located in WMCAT adjacent to our Bridge Street Market. The items are available while supplies last in all our supercenters and market format stores across the Midwest.

"It's rewarding to have the opportunity to work with young artists through WMCAT," Meijer Men's Apparel Buyer Alan Burchfield said. "These young artists can express their individual creative voices and are gaining exposure to the business of commercial art. My hope is this experience has a long-lasting positive impact."

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Additional assets available online: [Photos](#) <sup>(3)</sup>

<https://meijercommunity.com/WMCAT-Partnership-Brings-Student-Designs-to-Black-History-Month-Collection>