

NEWS RELEASE

April 2023

15-Hundred Free Haircuts... Served With a Message to Vote

A local Barbershop engagement group starts a grass roots movement to connect barbers and clients beyond the clippers.

CHICAGO, IL - Haircuts are getting more and more expensive and if one organization has its way, free haircuts won't be the only reason folks will flock to local participating barbers. The other reason? Good conversation about the importance of communities becoming civically engaged.

Jeffery Coleman, the Executive Director of Barbershop Network News Association is optimistic that this new push will re-ignite interest in heading to the polls. Coleman believes the 45 minutes that clients sit in their barber's chair is a powerful communication hub. His hope is this sacred time will influence patrons to re-connect and re-engage with politics. Coleman says, "A lot of people are not politically astute and don't even know who their state senator is, nor do they care. I always believe if we can capture and keep people interested, we can teach them the importance of their vote."

Right now, Jeffery is physically walking into barbershops and signing them up to give out free haircuts. Those barbers can then give their clients a coupon to use at the shop. Coleman is looking for help spreading the word. He says, "This is not just about civic engagement, it is also about business engagement. It's time to support and grow Chicago's Black-owned businesses once again."

That's why he is partnering with technology business entrepreneur Robert Blackwell Jr., founder of EKI-Digital, a technology consulting firm in Chicago. Blackwell is donating the funds to pay for the 15-hundred haircuts. He recently formed a new business advisory group called TESC, which stands for 'The Entrepreneurial Saving Chicago.' The informal group plans to support more initiatives to grow Black and Brown owned business and create well-being for all communities in Chicago. Blackwell says, "It is important to take action and help entrepreneurs solve customer problems, create social capital and lift their communities out of poverty."

Barbershop Network News Association is committed to a successful launch in Chicago and bringing this initiative to cities across the country.

For interviews with Jeffery Coleman, Robert Blackwell Jr. and participating barbers please contact Chief Executive Communications Strategist, Dawn Stevens, at dstevens@eki-digital.com or 612-508-7615.