

Young entrepreneur

Sophomore Eric Whistler launches his own clothing line

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Sophomore Eric Whistler and his friend Brandyn Ross, from Philadelphia, display merchandise Whistler created for his clothing brand, Overcomer.

Photo courtesy of Eric Whistler

Eric Whistler is making “big moves,” said his friend Yul Lee.

Lee, who works as Whistler’s brand ambassador, says he sees Whistler’s brand gaining popularity in the future and that Whistler will find success as a young Black entrepreneur. Whistler is a sophomore who is gaining more recognition each day. He is also a part of our school's student council, choir and the student television news station, RDTV.

Whistler’s teachers say he is well prepared and always ready for whatever is next.

“Once Eric becomes focused on something it is hard to deter him,” said Tambi Flye-McCall, Whistler’s RDTV teacher. She says he is engaged and is always prepared.

Whistler works almost every day after school making and customizing his orders. He creates the logos and designs for his clothing himself. The start of it all was a vision; he had a dream in which he saw himself doing this in the future.

“I created it to empower people to know that they can overcome all of their obstacles, regardless of what they are,” Whistler said, and added that his message is to let people know nothing is impossible and that anyone can do anything they set their mind to.

Lee occasionally helps Whistler with making the clothes. He brainstorms with him and endorses the brand. Lee said he enjoys the time spent and free clothes.

Whistler creates the designs for everything using his iPad using an app called Picsart. Then he uploads his designs into the software of a vinyl cutter and cuts the design out. He goes through a process called weeding where he takes the excess off and leaves the design on the sheet. Next, he uses his heat press machine to put the logo on the clothes.

Whistler launched his brand, Overcomer, in August with help from the Young Entrepreneur Program. During quarantine and lockdown, his youth pastor invited him to a Zoom meeting, which featured guest speakers who talked about how to make an impact in the city you live in.

After talking and listening to the students’ ideas, the YEP coaches realized how many of them wanted to start or had already started their own businesses. The YEP coaches helped the students make presentations and write business letters, and spoke with them about the financial side of running a business. Whistler presented his vision, which centered on “faith, family, and food,” he said. He wanted to incorporate these elements in his brand because of his spirituality, his love for his community and his love for food. (He also really enjoys cooking.)

YEP granted him a few thousand dollars from the city of Indianapolis, giving him an extra push for his business, just enough to afford all that he would need. He bought himself the machinery he needed.

Overcomer shirts cost \$25 for adult sizes and \$20 for child sizes. Hoodies are \$40, beanies \$15, tote bags \$20 and trucker hats \$20. One way to buy his brand is messaging him personally on one of his social media accounts and on his soon-to-be-built website. His handles are listed at the bottom of this story.

Whistler opens pop-up shops occasionally, but says the best way to promote his brand is through social media.

Contact Eric Whistler via social media

instagram @Overcomer_Clothing_

Twitter @Overcomer

Facebook @overcomerClothingOC

Tiktok @Overcomer_Clothing