

The Faces of Urban Forestry



Evelyn Ware-Jackson
Business owner



Trees Add New Life to Underserved Community

As an investor who renovates neglected homes, Evelyn Ware-Jackson looks at blighted areas a little differently than most people. Where others see despair, Evelyn sees opportunity. She also realizes restoring one home alone is not enough. You must redevelop the whole neighborhood.

Nowhere has she been more successful than in Melrose East, a once thriving neighborhood that has suffered years of disinvestment, neglect, crime, and disillusionment.

There were “just lots of multi-family and warehouse spaces,” describes Evelyn. “None of the sidewalks were shaded and everywhere was just drab concrete.”

This turned around when Evelyn accepted an offer from Baton Rouge Green for 300 trees funded by a U.S. Forest Service grant through the Louisiana Office of Forestry. The trees enabled Evelyn and residents of the neighborhood to complete a community reforestation program. The residents and other volunteers worked together to plant the trees.

Since the project’s completion, Evelyn meets people who thank her for the trees and say that their property values have increased. The trees not only added shade and beauty, the planting project served as a catalyst for other neighborhood improvements and provided a way for citizens to get involved with their neighborhood’s turnaround. The experience has also affected Evelyn. “Sometimes when you get something deep down inside you, it’s hard to get it out unless you see it happen,” she says. “The vision of the neighborhood makes me very happy.”

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A joint project of U.S. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry, the National Association of State Foresters, and the Arbor Day Foundation. For more information visit arborday.org/faces