



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Park Service, SkateMS Foundation, Midtown Partners and City of Jackson to build city's first public skate park.

JACKSON, MS – The National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) announced its community partnerships for 2014. A public concrete skateboard park in Jackson is among eleven new projects slated for the Southeast.

RCTA staff will work with the SkateMS Foundation, Midtown Partners, Inc. and the City of Jackson to revitalize and expand Benjamin Brown Park on Mill Street, in Midtown. When completed, the 10,000 sq.ft. skate park will be a central feature of a vibrant community space that also includes splash pads, walking trail and murals created by artists and youth who live, work and attend school in Midtown.

The skate park promises to provide an exciting new outlet for Mississippi youth in dire need of healthy opportunities, as evidenced by the state's consistent ranking at or near the bottom of national obesity and health metrics. Skateboarding offers an affordable and accessible alternative to team sports, in that it requires minimal equipment and can be enjoyed independently or with friends.

The National Park Service's RCTA is committed to collaborative, community-based projects promoting access to fitness and outdoor activities. The NPS will assist local partners with planning, public outreach, and program development. But even with their support, significant funding will be needed. Tax-deductible donations can be made at www.SkateMS.com.

The SkateMS Foundation is a non-profit organization affiliated with the Community Foundation of Greater Jackson. The group promotes outdoor fitness and healthier youth through skateboarding. Most recently, SkateMS helped plan and secure grant funding for the newly-opened skate park at Vicksburg City Park. The organization regularly hosts skateboard clinics to encourage healthy activity and safe skateboarding. They also donate skateboards and helmets to deserving children.

Midtown Partners, Inc. is a non-profit organization formed in 1995 to transform the lives of Midtown residents by building resident capacity, expanding opportunities and serving as a catalyst for improving the quality of life in the Midtown neighborhood of Jackson. Its programs focus on affordable housing and community development, economic and family security, workforce development, education, health, and community engagement.

The City of Jackson will also assist with the planning, fundraising and development process. When complete, the Midtown Skatepark will be a public park owned and maintained by the City, and as such, will be open and freely accessible to all.

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