

Post-Katrina Curricula Evaluated

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The Tulane University School of Social Work and Save the Children, an international organization that helps children in need, will present and discuss a special public report on the "Journey of Hope" curricula that have been under way in many New Orleans schools since Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005. The discussion will be on Tuesday (Dec. 8) from 9 a.m. to noon in room 103 of the Social Work building on the Tulane uptown campus.



The "Journey of Hope" curricula marked the first time that Save the Children responded to a disaster on U.S. soil. The curricula, which were administered with the help of more than a dozen School of Social Work interns, were used at more than 26 K-12 schools in New Orleans.

A discussion of the report, "Building Children's and Communities' Resilience: An Evaluation of Save the Children's Programming in New Orleans," will be moderated by Kathleen Whalen, psychosocial program manager for the Domestic Emergencies Unit of Save the Children. It will feature a panel discussion with representatives from local schools, behavioral agencies and community-based organizations.

After Hurricane Katrina, Save the Children created a psychosocial unit to address the mental health needs of its youngest victims. The result is a series of strength-based curricula written to build resilience in children and youth.

"I have seen this program help children explore their emotions and develop skills that build their resilience through developmentally appropriate music, art and literature while having fun and building relationships," says Whalen, a graduate of the Tulane School of Social Work and the school's field instructor with Save the Children. "The mental health professionals working in the schools have embraced this program for its child-centered, strength-based approach."

The curricula evaluation touts an improvement to children's welfare and overall resilience in three areas: social well-being, knowledge and skills, and emotional well-being.

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