

Outreach Tulane event adapts to pandemic, rain delay

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Outreach Tulane participants took part in a variety of virtual and campus projects. Above, Owen Pease and Gus Morrison clean catch basins near campus. (Photo by Sally Asher)

Tulane students strive to give back to the community, and Outreach Tulane has been the premier event for doing so for the last 30 years. The mission of this event is for Tulane students to get to know and serve the place that we all call home: New Orleans. Annually more than 1,000 volunteers take this opportunity to affect the city in a positive way.

Outreach Chair Maggie Conrad said, “The goal of Outreach Tulane is to introduce Tulane students to the needs of the New Orleans community. This year especially it is important to care about each other and give back to New Orleans as much as we can.”

This year’s event was held on Sept. 12 after a two-week rain delay. It was already set to look completely different due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with small volunteer groups working around campus or on virtual projects.

Those projects covered a variety of assignments. Students could volunteer to assemble and paint mini library boxes with PlayBuild, a nonprofit working to turn underutilized urban spaces into havens for children; clean up debris in catch basins around campus; make pet chew toys out of old T-shirts for Zeus’ Rescues, which works to eliminate pet homelessness and euthanasia; and pack backpacks with school supplies for schoolchildren with local nonprofit NetWork Volunteers.

Virtual assignments included staffing phone banks to call corporations and foundations for monetary and in-kind donations for local nonprofits such as Fair Maiden Services, Step Up Louisiana and Historic Faubourg Tremé Association.

Outreach Tulane originated as part of the mission of CACTUS (Community Action Council of Tulane University Students) in an effort to extend students’ influence beyond the classroom. Today CACTUS exists as an umbrella organization that oversees over 40 different projects and individual organizations. With the mantra “If you want peace, work for justice,” these students strive to better the world around them however they can.





Students make dog toys from old Outreach T-shirts for Zeus' Rescues. (Photo by Sally Asher)

Alexandria Leland is ready with equipment, on her way to clean nearby catch basins. (Photo by Sally Asher)