

Tulane graduate eager to build on global experience back home in New Orleans

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Michael Hornsby is graduating with a Master of Health Administration degree after years of working in project management, emergency management and health education. (Photo by Kacie Fayard)

For the past 20 years, Michael Hornsby, 46, has worked around the globe in places like Mozambique, Central America and Italy, and across the continental U.S. and Canada.

This month he embarks on his latest adventure back home in New Orleans.

Hornsby is graduating with a Master of Health Administration (MHA) degree from the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. The degree is a culmination of years of experience working in project management, emergency management and health education.

Right out of college, Hornsby joined the Peace Corps in Mozambique for three years and was involved in health education around HIV prevention. He returned to New Orleans in 2003 to train for his Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) license. Those plans were put on hold after Hurricane Katrina.

He then spent several years guiding hiking tours all over North America. "It was challenging work and a lot of fun, but I realized I wanted to find a way to be more useful," he said.

Years passed and he knew he eventually wanted to complete his EMT training. He was offered the opportunity to complete a training with the Italian Red Cross that got him back on an ambulance.

He worked overnight shifts in a small community in northern Italy for three years up until the pandemic. It was a difficult time as the Italian healthcare system was badly hit by COVID-19 in early 2020. But it also proved to be a valuable learning experience.

Hornsby remembered the stark difference from when vaccines were first offered to when healthcare workers could get their boosters.

"It was so orderly. In months, the Italian healthcare system had learned to respond to unprecedented catastrophic needs," he said. "It was quite an emotional moment to think about the things we can achieve if we get organized."

He also thought about his home, New Orleans, and how he could apply what he had learned to help his community. In 2022, he learned about the MHA program at Tulane and subsequently enrolled. After his studies, he wants to build on his work

experience and is considering someday pursuing a PhD at Tulane studying emergency response models around the world.

"I have had great professors here and I feel like my outlook has changed over the last two years," he said.

He is finishing his administrative residency at West Jefferson Medical Center while awaiting offers and dates to onboard with either the City of New Orleans EMS or LCMC EMS on a part-time or volunteer basis.

Right now, he's enjoying working with LCMC Health and is eager to serve the city in emergency response or in an administrative role. He hopes to continue to work in some way in EMS but also combine that experience with project management and volunteering.

"We will see, I am very much the kind of person that goes to where I think I can be useful," he said.