

Social Work to a Beat

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When Tulane social work student Julie Salomone saw her first Super Sunday event in New Orleans, with the pageantry of Mardi Gras Indians wearing their tribes' colors and suits as they competed with other tribes, she was hooked.



Tulane social work student Tiffany Singleton (from left), Sweet Home New Orleans case manager Joe Stern and social work student Julie Salomone attend a Super Sunday celebration, the Mardi Gras Indians' most significant day besides Mardi Gras. (Photo from Sweet Home New Orleans)

Salomone and fellow student Tiffany Singleton are interns at Sweet Home New Orleans, a nonprofit group founded after Hurricane Katrina that works to perpetuate New Orleans' unique musical and cultural traditions including musicians, Mardi Gras Indians and social aid and pleasure club members.

Each [School of Social Work](#) student must complete a 990-hour field placement with an agency like Sweet Home New Orleans. Salomone has especially enjoyed her work and the cultural learning experience.

"It has been very rewarding because you're learning about social work while learning to work with different populations," she says.

Singleton envisions herself working more in community outreach than in a clinical setting, so Sweet Home New Orleans has been a perfect fit. She helps clients find the assistance they need and aids the nonprofit in earning grants to continue its work. Since 2005 Sweet Home has provided more than \$2.4 million in financial assistance to more than 2,300 members of the city's music community.

"We are filling direct needs," says Singleton. "If our clients need help with something, we make sure they can find it. We do a lot of referral work."

Originally the New Orleans Musicians Hurricane Relief Fund, then Renew Our Music, the groups merged with Sweet Home New Orleans in January 2008 to better assist musicians and the city's culture-bearers. Since then, Tulane students have aided the group's mission and administered Sweet Home New Orleans services such as paying for hundreds of local gigs each year and connecting clients to the resources they need as the industry continues to recover.

Joseph Halm is marketing/communications coordinator for the Tulane School of Social Work.