

Making a Difference

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D. J. Dietze, a junior majoring in political economy at Tulane, will make a motivational speech for 6th and 7th graders at Lafayette Academy on South Carrollton Avenue on Thursday (Jan. 7).

[Dietze](#), who sustained a traumatic brain injury as a youngster after a gun accident, is in a wheelchair but has not missed a single class in his three years at Tulane. He says, "I am striving to educate and inspire the next generation to be better citizens by understanding the meaning of life better."

About 150 students will participate, as well as teachers and administrators. After Dietze talks to the kids for about 20 minutes, he will do an interview-style question-and-answer session with Carolyn Stowe, founder and executive director of [Liberation Through Education](#), a nonprofit organization that seeks to develop positive views on education and community.

Dietze has been involved with a number of public-service projects. He is especially proud of his contributions to the first putt-putt course designed specifically for disabled children.

"As president of the Horticulture Club at Grace King High School, I have worked relentlessly on this project with our sponsor Erich Sollenberger and a group of Tulane University biomedical seniors who are building the adaptive putter we need," Dietze says. "I am serving as a consultant and a prototype tester on the project again this year."

During high school, the New Orleans native founded and still maintains a recycling program at his school and in his neighborhood. Through his program, Dietze collected more than 450 pounds of cans and 7,000 pounds of paper in the past two school years, which he brought to Tulane as a member of Tulane University's Green Club to be entered into RecycleMania, a nationwide recycling contest among competing universities.

He also has volunteered at the Audubon Zoo's Earth Fest and the Audubon Nature Center.

The Clinton Global Initiative chose Dietze to serve as the Clinton Global Initiative University campus representative at Tulane in recognition of his extraordinary commitment to environmental sustainability and awareness.

In this capacity, he recently started a cell-phone collection at Tulane to help Christina Davis, an international development major from Seattle University, who was traveling to Africa to study educational systems there in cooperation with Student2Students, a grassroots student organization. The money generated by the donated cell phones was used to provide scholarships for students in Malawi.