

## Spirit of Giving

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The Tulane Staff Advisory Council (SAC) and the Black Faculty and Staff Association once again selected a community project for the holiday season to assist children who are without parents. This year, staff members contributed more than \$2,100 in cash and gift cards, as well as two big bags of toys and gifts.



Gwen Chavez, vice-chair of the Staff Advisory Council, delivers donations from Tulane staff members to Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for abused and neglected children. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

The donations went to Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Orleans Parish, CASA of Jefferson Parish and CASA of St. Tammany Parish, organizations that train volunteers to be advocates for abused and neglected children. Through the agencies, toys and gifts are given to children in foster homes, group homes and hospitals. CASA serves more than 400 children in Orleans Parish, 300 in Jefferson Parish and 200 in St. Tammany Parish, mostly teenagers and primarily boys.

Gwen Chavez, SAC vice-chair who works in the Tulane controller's office, personally delivered the donations. She says the staff organizations decided to give to the

three parishes because Tulane has campuses in all three.

For the drive, staff members were asked to give a cash donation, gift card or gift with a maximum dollar amount of \$20, but every donation, however small, helped the cause.

"CASA is extremely grateful and wants me to pass on bunches of thank-yous to all of the staff members who contributed," Chavez says. "The CASA staff and volunteers feel the kids in their program are *their* kids."

The two Tulane staff organizations spearhead several community service projects throughout the year, including funding school supplies for local children and building a playground.

"I think it gives people a sense of helping, giving whatever you can give and putting a smile on someone's face," Chavez says. "It makes *me* feel better."

Chavez said she hoped the holiday gift drive also would serve to draw attention to CASA, which needs volunteers. For more information, go to the [Louisiana CASA website](#).