

## **Food for Thought**

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newwave@tulane.edu

The dinner table traditionally is a comfort zone in which we not only share stories but also learn about ourselves and each other. The "Comfort Food" program by Tulane University medical students, which received a \$5,000 Helping Hands grant from the American Psychiatric Foundation and support from chef John Besh, models itself after this notion.

The program, designed by students Jamie Elson and Daniella Miller, pairs cooking with counseling by giving adolescents suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and depression the chance to share their stories in the kitchen and at the table.

**Watch medical students discuss the "Comfort Food" program while teens make jambalaya with Chef John Besh in this video produced by Brandon Meginley.**

"A lot of these kids have been exposed to murders, family members who have left them as young children, the drug world and a violent atmosphere," Miller says.

Besh, a renowned New Orleans chef and owner of six Crescent City restaurants, helped the teens from Walter L. Cohen Senior High School create an enormous pot of jambalaya in early December. The program began in September and will continue until May 2010.

"We hope that [the students] find an interest and a passion for cooking, because it can be a lifelong way of coping with depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress," Elson says.

*Brandon Meginley is a senior majoring in journalism at Tulane University.*