

Social Work Students Connect With Kids

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Inside the St. Bernard NORD Center, a group of Tulane School of Social Work students and recent graduates are working toward one goal — helping New Orleans' youth lead healthy, happy lives.



Tulane School of Social Work student Brittane Bernard works with children during the Cops for Kids summer camp at the St. Bernard NORD Center. (Photo by Joseph Halm)

They are working with the Cops for Kids summer camp, an eight-week program for children aged 5-13 sponsored by the New Orleans Recreation Department, New Orleans Police Department, New Orleans Police and Justice Foundation, Crimestoppers and Greater New Orleans Afterschool Partnership.

Camp coordinator and Tulane alumna Kathleen Whalen says there are 170 registered campers. "The majority is from New Orleans East, but we pull from all over," she says. "It has been very positive, and I'm really pleased with how it worked out."

The program uses engaging and enriching educational projects to help children develop and reinforce literacy and math skills while learning about the city's rich culture. Daily interaction with police officers and a curriculum such as Save the Children's Journey of Hope are designed to teach resilience, anger management and conflict resolution, providing campers with the skills and attitudes to navigate their world with confidence.

Campers also participate in daily physical activity such as tennis, basketball, soccer and swimming as well as arts programs in band, dance, choral music and visual arts.

In total, five [social work](#) students are interning this summer at the NORD center, while five camp staff members are recent graduates. Brittaney Bernard is one of those interns.

"I think the biggest learning experience for me has been working with children who have problems communicating their feelings," says Bernard, whose school-year internship is at Edward Hynes Charter School.

"I can look at what background factors are influencing this child's behavior," Bernard says. "I'm able to ask why this child is acting this way. I'm able to think more about how social factors influence how children act, and that is something that I haven't really seen."

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