

Boosting Family Resiliency

September 15, 2010 11:15 AM Joseph Halm
newwave@tulane.edu

Renowned family therapist and author Froma Walsh reached out to more than 200 social work students and community members during a recent visit to the New Orleans area. She went to Plaquemines and St. Bernard parishes to meet with social work professionals as part of a mental health needs assessment being conducted by the Tulane School of Social Work and to discuss mental health care services that are needed to address the stress of the Gulf oil spill.



During her visit to southeast Louisiana, author and family therapist Froma Walsh, right, talks with Rick Ager, director of the Porter-Cason Institute at Tulane. (Photo by Joseph Halm)

Walsh's visit, sponsored by the [Porter-Cason Institute](#) at the School of Social Work, included a presentation to social work students, a discussion with social work

faculty, consultation and training for agencies affected by the Gulf oil spill and a community workshop for advanced service providers.

“It is extremely encouraging to see the support families are receiving in southeast Louisiana,” Walsh said. “We were able to nail down the framework for new and innovative programs to boost family resilience in the face of this recent disaster as well as improve any existing programs to better serve the community.”

Walsh provided training at the St. Bernard Project, which creates housing opportunities and mental health services for those affected by Hurricane Katrina. She also worked with service providers at the Plaquemines Community CARES Center, which serves families, children, domestic abuse victims, the elderly and disabled.

“During the past five years, two major disasters and economic downturns continue to leave south Louisiana families reeling with stress,” said Parker Sternbergh, Porter-Cason Institute assistant director. “The family is the basic building block of the community, and we believe her visit to train practitioners, agencies and students will ultimately help shore up our communities' families.”

Walsh, co-director of the Chicago Center for Family Health, is a professor emerita at the University of Chicago and the author of *Strengthening Family Resilience* and *Spiritual Resources in Family Therapy*.

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