

Got beads? Throw 'Em to Charity!

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Each year, Mardi Gras beads make a cycle from the hands of the krewe members who throw them from floats to the hands of eager parade-goers, through the hands of Tulane students, to the hands of intellectually disabled citizens trained and employed by the nonprofit Arc of Greater New Orleans, and back to Mardi Gras krewes.



Tulane students help sort Mardi Gras beads at the ARC of Greater New Orleans during a day of public service. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

In 2010, [Arc](#) sold 63,000 pounds of recycled Mardi Gras beads that had been carefully collected and resorted. Tulane students donated 10,000 pounds of Mardi Gras beads to Arc's reselling program last year.

During move-out from residence halls on campus at the end of spring semester, Tulane collects an estimated 5 to 7 tons of Carnival throws.

“We are the world champions of Mardi Gras bead recycling,” boasts Liz Davey, director of [environmental affairs](#) at Tulane. “It's something we specialize in here in New Orleans.”

Bead recycling is a great reminder to students that recycling is all about capturing the value of the things we use ? not just keeping materials out of the landfill sites, Davey adds.

This past summer, Davey accompanied students to the Arc on a [NOLA Experience](#) session called “Down and Dirty in the Big Easy,” where they helped Arc workers sort the beads for resale.

“Where can eager recyclers who want to recycle beads take them right after Mardi Gras? Bring them to the Arc,” says Margie Perez, recycling coordinator for the nonprofit. “We have two uptown drop-off locations: 5700 Loyola Ave. at Nashville Avenue, and the Whole Foods on Magazine Street. Also in Metairie, where our warehouse is at 925 S. Labarre Rd.”

Campus and community groups interested in working on bead recycling drives can contact Perez at the Arc, 504-837-5140.