

Entrepreneurs Talk About Social Ventures

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As part of National Make a Difference Week, students gathered on the Tulane uptown campus on Tuesday (Oct. 19) to hear from Robert Fogarty, founder of Evacuteer.org, and two other young New Orleans professionals who developed nonprofits or social ventures that address community needs.



The founder of Evacuteer.org, Robert Fogarty talks with students about getting a new social venture off the ground. (Photo by Claire Barry)

The discussion was part of a series of events for the special week, sponsored on campus by the Tulane [Center for Public Service](#). The center also is sponsoring a [day of service](#) on Saturday (Oct. 23) in conjunction with a national service day.

Tuesday's discussion group with social entrepreneurs was the first in the "Want a Job In?" series. In addition to Fogarty, other speakers were Stephanie O'Brien, council director of the New Orleans chapter of [Girls on the Run](#); and Johanna Gilligan of the Clean Plates Project. They described their own social endeavors and offered advice

for those considering starting an organization.

The speakers emphasized the difficulty of establishing a nonprofit and obtaining funds for the organization.

“If you want to start a nonprofit be prepared to be rejected a lot,” advised Fogarty, whose organization, [Evacuteer.org](https://www.evacuteer.org), assists in the safe and efficient hurricane evacuation of New Orleans residents. Also the founder of the Dear New Orleans photography project, he said his biggest advice is to focus on creative ways to find funding.

“As big as your organization may be, expect to bat less than 10 percent in grant applications,” Fogarty said. “Start to think about how to find money in interesting and different places.”

The speakers stressed the importance of networking and building relationships before the pressure of the job search.

“There are a lot of people doing interesting things in New Orleans and starting relationships now will be really beneficial in the long run,” said O'Brien.

Gilligan emphasized the importance of learning and developing in a supportive environment before taking on the responsibility of a new organization.

“Most people are not ready to start their own project when they come out of college,” said Gilligan. “Having an opportunity to seek a well-developed model or mentor for whatever you're interested in doing is tremendously beneficial.”

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