

Taking a stand against violence

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“Not only are you survivors, you're superheroes,” rang out one open mic participant's thoughts at the 20th annual Take Back the Night on Wednesday (Oct. 26) evening. The rally, sponsored by Tulane, Dillard and Loyola universities, focuses on breaking the silence often associated with sexual and gender-based violence.



Students from Tulane, Dillard and Loyola universities gather to light candles before marching in the 20th anniversary Take Back the Night march on Oct. 26. “I love to see students gathering in large numbers with faculty, staff and community members to show we all have a role in the fight against sexual violence,” said Allen Thomas, coordinator of violence prevention and support services. (Photo by Sabree Hill)

The event aims to empower survivors of violence and provide a safe environment in which they share their stories with others, many of whom have experienced similar traumas in their lives.

The event began at the Loyola horseshoe with inspirational words from students and staff members, and a blessing by social justice champion Al Alcazar. The march progressed up St. Charles Avenue, turned on Broadway and entered the Tulane uptown campus.

The marchers held candles and chanted rally cries such as “2-4-6-8 No more violence, no more rape,” and “No more fear, no more silence, hear our voices, no more violence.”

Upon arriving at the Freeman Auditorium on the Tulane uptown campus, the procession overflowed onto the stage, into the aisles and out both doors, but space was made for all who wanted to attend. Cordelia Heaney, director of Newcomb student programs, welcomed the group and opened the microphone for those willing to share their stories.

Emotional stories flowed, many for the first time, about subjects ranging from verbal and psychological abuse, physical abuse, molestation and rape.

One particularly emotional and courageous survivor verbalized the sentiment that many echoed in regard to their own experiences: “Never question your self-worth. You are worth something. And if you ever have this experience, or have suspicions, speak out. It matters.”

Take Back the Night was sponsored by the [Newcomb College Institute](#).

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