

## "Teachers make good neighbors"

November 04, 2011 12:00 PM Alicia Duplessis Jasmin  
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A roadblock that may have discouraged others was the motivating factor behind Tulane graduate William Stoudt creating the Youth Rebuilding New Orleans organization that has been rebuilding homes for the city's educators since the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.



William Stoudt, a 2011 business and political science graduate, leads Youth Rebuilding New Orleans. More than half of its board members are 22 years old or younger. (Photo by Guillermo Cabrera-Rojo)

At the time of the storm, Stoudt, a high school student and native New Orleanian, was displaced to Houston where he hoped to join other volunteers arriving in the city to help rebuild. He was thwarted by being told repeatedly that he was too young to participate in gutting flooded homes and other cleanup efforts. He soon looked

beyond the denials for a way to contribute.

“My friends and I were anxious to get back and get involved, but many of the organizations wouldn't allow us to help because there could be problems with liability,” says Stoudt, who serves as executive director of the organization. He volunteered with YRNO when it was founded in 2006 with the help of Tulane alumnus Robert F. Whitman Jr.

“We started talking about how we could make an impact, and one of our first accomplishments was organizing a neighborhood cleanup with hundreds of people,” Stoudt says.

What started as a small group of friends gutting flooded homes is now a full-fledged nonprofit organization that buys, renovates and sells dilapidated homes to a specific group of individuals ? educators.

“We focus on teachers because those were the people who were back in the city teaching students while living in trailers,” says Stoudt. “Teachers make good neighbors.”

Since graduating with a degree in business in May, Stoudt continues a relationship with the [Tulane Center for Public Service](#). His organization is a community partner that offers volunteer opportunities to Tulane students.

To date, [Youth Rebuilding New Orleans](#) has renovated and sold three homes, with a long-term goal of building newly constructed homes.