

Law grad boosts career through J-Grad network

February 28, 2012 1:15 AM Fran Simon

fsimon@tulane.edu

The job market remains tough to navigate for recent graduates all across the country. But Stella Cziment, who received her Tulane law degree in 2011, got a career boost from a unique networking program in New Orleans.



Stella Cziment, a 2011 Tulane law graduate, works from her home in the Marigny neighborhood of New Orleans for a job she landed through the J-Grad networking program. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Through the [J-Grad Student Retention Program](#) of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans, Cziment was able to meet local area attorneys, business leaders and other professionals who are investing their time to mentor recent graduates, hoping that their efforts will help keep young, talented Jews in the Crescent City.

Keen on pursuing a career in public interest law, Cziment was able to arrange meetings through people she met at J-Grad networking events that led to a part-time job investigating employment discrimination cases with the Louisiana Commission on Human Rights.

“This is an extraordinarily difficult field to break into, and I knew it would be challenging,” Cziment says. “The applicant pool has tripled, but the number of jobs has diminished.”

She wanted to stay in New Orleans, but considered relocating to Washington, D.C.

“I missed New Orleans so much. I realized, why move to D.C. to stand up for renters' rights when I can do that here in New Orleans?”

Cziment hopes that further networking will lead to a full-time, permanent position for her in the Big Easy. Through J-Grad, she also found out about a volunteer opportunity to be a photographer for the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival.

“These connections ? you never know where they'll lead, whether for a professional or a personal goal. The economy will come and go, but the J-Grad network is here to stay,” Cziment says.

J-Grad is open to all Jewish graduate and undergraduate students as well as recent graduates. The coordinator of J-Grad and the Jewish Newcomers Program is [Carey Sherman](#), another Tulane grad who remained in New Orleans after graduation.