

## Matzah ball soup: the cure for what ails you

February 01, 2013 10:45 AM Barri Bronston  
bbronst@tulane.edu

The staff at Tulane Hillel knows exactly when the flu on campus is at its worst. And it's not by the number of students who walk through the doors with chills, fever and all-around achiness. It's by the number of calls it fields on its matzah ball soup hotline.



Matzah ball soup ? either with chicken broth or vegetarian ? is offered each weekday by Hillel's Kitchen. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Sometimes parents call, other times roommates call. There is even the occasional text. The messages, often desperate sounding, typically go like this: “Matzah ball soup, please, and hurry!”

“The idea behind it is that we want to create a sense of community and of caring for one another,” said Rabbi Yonah Schiller, executive director of [Tulane Hillel](#). “And there's no better way of doing that than with a bowl of matzah ball soup.”

The weekday service is free to Tulane students, and you don't have to be Jewish or live in a campus dormitory to benefit. The only requirement is that you are indeed sick. The common cold counts.

Since the beginning of the school year, Hillel has delivered more than 100 orders of soup, each with two matzah balls. As expected, flu season has brought the most calls and online requests, said Corey Smith, Hillel's associate director.

Orders placed before 3 p.m. are delivered the same day; later orders go out the next day. "We bring it right to their room," Smith said. "The RAs know us."

Schiller and Smith said they are happy to report that no one, as far as they know, has abused the service. "We use the honor system," Smith said. "It seems that people only call when they are really sick."

So what do you do if you're craving matzah ball soup and you're not ill? Just head to Hillel's Kitchen, located in the Goldie and Morris Mintz Center for Jewish Life at 912 Broadway, where for \$3.50 you can buy your own bowl of "Jewish penicillin."