

Organization devotes a week to Cowen Service Challenge

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During the first full week of January, [Youth Rebuilding New Orleans](#) will have dozens of volunteers in town from around the country working at various sites. As part of the organization's partnership with Tulane University, Youth Rebuilding New Orleans will dedicate the entire week's worth of volunteer hours to the [Cowen Service Challenge](#).



William Stoudt, a 2011 Tulane alumnus, co-founded Youth Rebuilding New Orleans, which has been rebuilding homes for New Orleans' teachers since Hurricane Katrina. The organization is dedicating the first full week of January to the Cowen Service Challenge. (Photo by Guillermo Cabrera-Rojo)

The challenge aims to encourage students, alumni, faculty, staff and friends of the university to celebrate Tulane University President Scott Cowen's legacy of supporting healthy and vibrant communities through direct community service. By May 2, 2014, 750,000 hours of service will be completed in New Orleans and around the world.

Native New Orleanian [William Stoudt](#) was in high school when Hurricane Katrina devastated much of the city. Stoudt and his friends were eager to rebuild, but often were turned away because of their age. Stoudt co-founded Youth Rebuilding New Orleans, an organization that has been rebuilding homes since 2006, with the help of Tulane alumnus Robert F. Whitman Jr.

What started as a small group of friends gutting flooded homes has blossomed into a nonprofit organization that buys, renovates and sells dilapidated homes to educators.

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

“Our community partners have seen the tremendous growth of Tulane's engagement with the community over the last decade and they appreciate our collective effort,” says Vincent Illustre, executive director of the [Tulane Center for Public Service](#). “YRNO's leadership with contributing to the Cowen Service Challenge is just one sign of their support of the university's engagement agenda. Many of our community partners are following suit and will be contributing to the Challenge. Just like alumni, faculty, staff and students, our community partners want to be 'in that number'.”