

Students aim to bolster resilience in first responders

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More than 25 first responders from the Loyola and Tulane university communities were honored with a “Just Desserts” reception as students from the Tulane [School of Social Work](#) held a special “First Responder Appreciation” event at the Lavin-Bernick Center for University Life on the Tulane University uptown campus.



Richard Potts, chief of police at Tulane, talks with Jane Parker, center, and Kathleen Benedetto during an event designed to bolster resilience in first responders' families on Sept. 26. (Photo by Joseph Halm)

“We have a tendency here to work with our community in a proactive way, and it's great to know that they appreciate what we're doing,” said Richard Potts, chief of police with the Tulane University Police Department. “It is just nice to have something like this. Self-care is so important for our officers, and a lot of times just talking to each other helps a lot.”

The event was part of the students' professional project for the master of social work degree, which centers on boosting resilience among the families of first responders. The students ? Shannon Barr, Kathleen Benedetto, Ashley Edgar and Jamie Story ? created a presentation about resilience and how to enhance family resilience for

police officers, fire fighters and emergency medical technicians.

Story, who presented for the group, said first responders can use the “3 Cs” ? control, challenge and commitment ? to help build resilience in their families.

Jane Parker, director of the Institute for Psychosocial Health and the disaster mental health certificate, said the students' project is timely and well researched. The institute is building a full curriculum on First Responder Resilience Education and Enhancement to offer in the community.

“Our vision is to make Responder Appreciation Day an annual event for our Tulane and Loyola first responders, involving families of responders in creative ways each year,” Parker said.

Participants also heard from Jerry Sneed, deputy mayor and director of homeland security and public safety for New Orleans.

“Each of you play such an important part in this community's safety on a daily basis, and I thank you for all that you do,” said Sneed, a lieutenant colonel with the New Orleans Police Department.

Joseph Halm is marketing/communications coordinator for the Tulane School of Social Work.