

Ruth's Hospitality Group, Inc. Donates Broad Street Building to Tulane

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In honor of founder Ruth Fertel, Ruth's Hospitality Group, Inc., the parent company of Ruth's Chris Steak House, announced today that it has donated the site of the Broad Street Ruth's Chris Steak House to Tulane University for the creation of the Ruth U. Fertel /Tulane Community Health Center, a neighborhood-based medical home that will provide care to patients regardless of insurance status or ability to pay.

The building will honor the restaurant company's founder, Ruth Fertel, who transformed the Broad Street restaurant into a New Orleans dining institution that would grow to become one of the world's largest upscale steakhouse companies.

Fertel worked as a lab technician with Tulane University School of Medicine before leveraging all her savings to open a steak restaurant in Mid City. Her residence was next to the restaurant and Fertel was revered as a passionate and generous neighborhood advocate and patron.

"There couldn't be a more fitting tribute to Ruth," said Ruth's Hospitality Group's President and CEO Michael O'Donnell. "Her entrepreneurial spirit built this international company with a single-minded focus on quality. As we begin the 45th year of Ruth's Chris Steak House, her pioneering spirit is assisting the neighborhood where she lived and worked. It is an honor to partner with Tulane to improve and expand health care for her communityâ€"one that did so much for her and our brand. Ruth was a living legend, whose legacy will continue to serve the city and people she loved so much."

Recognized as a leader in community philanthropy, this gift to create the Ruth U. Fertel/Tulane Community Health Center represents the largest single charitable gift in Ruth's Hospitality Group, Inc.'s history.

“We are grateful to Ruth's Hospitality Group for generously donating an important New Orleans landmark. Ruth Fertel was a true trailblazer in the hospitality industry and this gift will help us carry on that innovative spirit as we rebuild New Orleans health care,” says Tulane University President Scott Cowen. “The donation of this building will allow us to move forward with a new, larger community health center that will serve more patients and improve the health and well-being of residents in a community still recovering from the impact of Hurricane Katrina.”

The 9,200 square-foot building and property was appraised at \$600,000 in 2006. Tulane will relocate its Tulane Community Health Center at Covenant House to the larger and more accessible site at 711 N. Broad St., the heart of the neighborhoods where most of the existing clinic's patients live. The new center will have more than double the space of the current facility, allowing doctors to accommodate more patients and offer expanded adult and pediatric services to treat entire families.

“Tulane's neighborhood-based healthcare initiatives are focused on meeting the needs of residents in neighborhoods severely damaged by flooding from Hurricane Katrina, particularly those who are uninsured without other options,” says Dr. Karen DeSalvo, Tulane University vice dean for Community Affairs and Health Policy. “Tulane moved forward with this initiative in the first weeks following the storm. Every aspect of the community and its leadership are involved to ensure that these patient-centered community medical homes provide the services neighborhoods need to heal — both physically and mentally.”

Tulane currently serves nearly 900 patients from the Treme, Mid-City and surrounding areas at its existing Covenant House site, which opened in September 2005. The new health center will have a capacity to serve more than 1,200 patients per month and will offer primary care to all ages, mental and behavioral health services, geriatrics care and reproductive health services. The Ruth U. Fertel /Tulane Community Health Center will also be more convenient for patients, as the facility has parking for up to 50 vehicles and is at the intersection of two major bus lines.

The center will have a staff of 25, including five doctors, two social workers, a nurse practitioner and 19 administrative workers. It will also support workforce training for physicians, nurses, social workers, pharmacists and other health workers. The site will be an active training ground for health care innovation.

It will play a key role in the ongoing recovery of the surrounding area by both improving the health of residents and serving as an anchor tenant of a vital commercial corridor within the Broad Street neighborhood. In partnership with the community, the center will offer space for community events such as after-school programs, public meetings and other neighborhood gatherings.

Construction on the center is expected to begin this fall. Plans call for the clinic to be open by summer of 2010.

In addition to the health center at Covenant House, Tulane operates Tulane Community Health Center in New Orleans East and the Walter L. Cohen School-Based Health Center. Tulane also operates the Community Health Center "On the Road" and the New Orleans Children's Health Project Primary Care/Mental Health Mobile Units, which travel to schools across the metropolitan area.

Founded by Ruth Fertel in 1965, Ruth's Hospitality Group, Inc. is the largest upscale steakhouse company in the U.S., as measured by the total number of company-owned and franchise-owned restaurants, and has more than 120 locations worldwide.

Ruth's Hospitality Group, Inc. also owns Mitchell's Fish Market, which operates under the names Mitchell's Fish Market and Columbus Fish Market, an award-winning, upscale casual seafood restaurant and bar recognized for its high quality food, contemporary dining atmosphere, and excellent service, with 19 locations, and Cameron's Steakhouses, which operates under the names Cameron's Steakhouse and Mitchell's Steakhouse, a sophisticated 21st century update of the upscale American steakhouse, with three locations.