

Rebuilding New Orleans one house at a time

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Chesley McCarty works to install kitchen cabinetry.

Founded in 2005, the goal of [URBANbuild](#) is to address New Orleans' deteriorating neighborhoods and to provide students the chance to work together on the design, development and construction of affordable housing. The program is run by Tulane's School of Architecture and by senior professor of practice Byron Mouton and adjunct lecturer Sam Richards.

Students spend the fall semester in the classroom designing a home and drafting construction documents. The spring semester is spent onsite, where students work in a fast-paced, 15-week timeframe to construct the home. They are active in the entire construction process, from clearing the site to laying the foundation to hanging the sheathing and siding to installing the roof.

“URBANbuild has been one of the most important moments in my architecture education,” says fourth-year architecture student Chesley McCarty. “It is so rewarding to look back and see a real-life finished product that someone will eventually live in, not just some model made of chipboard and pretty pictures hanging on the wall.”

This spring, URBANbuild celebrates its 10th house, located at 2117 Toledano.





Ashley Ricketson builds the platform for the air-conditioning unit.

Ben Feiger, Mike Meline, and Kathleen Aurora Smith inspect the prep work before installing the siding.

URBANbuild students with adjunct lecturer Sam Richards (far right) are thrilled with their progress.