

Tulane graduate student works with community to enhance greenway

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Robert Palestina

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As New Orleans continues to roll forward new initiatives to create a more active and healthy community, one Tulane graduate had the opportunity to support one - the city's longest linear public park - as part of Tulane Prevention Research Center's (PRC) [Health Promotion Practicum program](#).

The [Lafitte Greenway](#) is a 2.6-mile multi-use trail that allows both pedestrians and cyclists to travel from Mid-City to the French Quarter while connecting neighborhoods, green spaces, and recreation fields along the way. Greta Cappelmann, a recent master's degree graduate from the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, contributed to the ongoing growth of this project through an internship with the Friends of Lafitte Greenway (FOLG).



FOLG is a non-profit community partner that works to ensure that the Lafitte Greenway develops into a safe, vibrant, and active community asset. Future plans of the Greenway are a part of a federal government initiative called [Local Foods, Local Places](#), which provides communities with technical support to assist the integration of local food systems into their economic action plans. FOLG was selected in 2014 to participate in the Local Foods, Local Places initiative and in turn created the Growing the Greenway project with a purpose of developing community gardens and farmers' markets along the trail.

Greta's practicum centered on supporting and creating a community-led process to create a proposal to the City of New Orleans for a community garden on the Lafitte Greenway. As a community-led process, community engagement played a significant role in Greta's efforts.

"As a public health graduate student with an interest in food access, Greta was well equipped with the knowledge of the barriers community members often face when it

comes to their involvement in a community health program," said Nellie Catzen, program coordinator for FOLG and Greta's supervisor. "With an understanding of these barriers, Greta was able to tailor her approach on how to utilize the resources of the Greenway, recruit community members, and promote the program among them,"

Her skillset helped Greta to contribute to the overall goal of the project as she worked to put together the committee, manage and plan the program, engage in community outreach, explore partnerships, and organize and participate in monthly meetings, among other responsibilities. The importance of these skills became even more pronounced as Greta moved forward with the project, understanding the power of community members and leaders and their involvement in community capacity building.



"The most surprising and exciting part of this internship was meeting the passionate group of people working on this project years before I came on the team," said

Greta. "It is a close group of people who are leaders in their community, who all work together to achieve this common goal. They were all so welcoming and supportive, and I was honored that they trusted my opinions and my contributions to this plan."

Although Greta's practicum has completed, she still continues to volunteer her time to FOLG. The project is on temporary hold as the city prepares to release the request for proposal, the next step in the creation of this community garden on the Lafitte Greenway. For more information, visit www.lafittegreenway.org

*By Robert Palestina, Tulane PRC Graduate Assistant
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(Photos courtesy of Friends of Lafitte Greenway: 1) Greta teaches gardening skills to local children 2) a community design charrette Greta helped coordinate 3) Growing the Greenway Action Committee meeting led by Greta)