

Are you a YURP*? Read excerpts from what local and national media outlets have to say about the thousands of people between 21 and 35 who are flocking to rebuild New Orleans - and having a good time doing it.

**Young Urban Recovery Professional*

The Times-Picayune

Sunday, August 19, 2007, page 1

**They're young, educated.
Some are from New Orleans, many are not.
They're all choosing to make a difference. Here.**

By Molly Reid

Five days after she graduated from college in Philadelphia, Miji Park was gutting houses in New Orleans.

Bright and articulate with a degree in urban planning, Park said she was "not the world's best gutter," so the 23-year-old volunteered for a month at The Idea Village, a local nonprofit group that supports entrepreneurs.

She interviewed more than 60 entrepreneurs that month, from New Orleans and everywhere else. Each was passionate about contributing new ideas and services to the post-Katrina economic landscape, as were her colleagues.

Park had been here only a short while, but she realized that if any city in the United States could take a Katrina-induced breath of progressivism and turn it into something truly groundbreaking, it was New Orleans.

Park had lined up a well-paid research position in her hometown of Berkeley, Calif., and was to start in July 2006. She saw her work in New Orleans as more urgent and relevant, and she resisted the pull of a nice salary and a ticket home.

"The job in Berkeley was just a number and nothing else," she said. "What I could get from New Orleans was so much greater."

Park took a full-time position with The Idea Village in August as an associate in community development and urban planning, and she has been here since.

It's a story told over and over with every out-of-state young professional who arrives in New Orleans,

bright-eyed and typically not long out of college, or every young native who returns home with a renewed sense of civic pride and duty.

Many, like Park, arrive to volunteer for a couple of weeks and decide to stay. Others hear about post-Katrina life from friends who have settled in New Orleans and become intrigued by the wealth of opportunity the rebuilding city seems to offer.



Nurturing a brain gain

New Orleans has become the testing ground for a new career and lifestyle ideal among today's 20-somethings – called "millennials" by some – one that places less importance on the value of money, title and a swift climb up the corporate ladder.

Faced with an increasingly global economy, less job security and more awareness of global problems, many graduates are seeking a more fluid and socially responsible career. New Orleans, with its myriad systems in crisis and authentic laissez faire charm, has emerged as a new mecca for adventurous young people.

City on the radar

To Tim Williamson, 42, founder of The Idea Village, the influx of young people is more than a trend.

He sees it as part of a shift in New Orleans' collective ethos, one moving away from an entrenched old guard toward what he calls the "vanguards" of post-Katrina New Orleans.

The blow Katrina dealt to the city's centuries-old economic, political and social patterns has created an unprecedented amount of room for new ideas to take hold, which is precisely the kind of gap Williamson hoped to fill in 2000 when he founded The Idea Village

A magnet for fresh talent

“Post-Katrina, there’s an opportunity for talent to be attracted to us because there’s an environment of social change. The people who are coming here are passion-driven. If you graduate from Harvard or something, you can move to New York and be just another person, or you can come here and be a part of something that’s going to put your mark on changing the city,” he said.

People want to be here

In June, Forbes magazine ranked New Orleans 17th among major American cities for attracting young professionals, beating out larger metropolises like Houston, San Diego and Chicago. New Orleans also placed third for its concentration of unmarried people in their 20s and 30s.

Teach for America has placed 120 new teachers, almost all of them age 22-35, in New Orleans for the 2007-08 school year. In addition, more than 200 Teach for America alumni, who have completed their two-year stints, decided to stay in New Orleans to continue their careers, 100 of them working within the education system.

Generational marker

Why does New Orleans resonate so strongly with today’s graduates? According to a 2006 survey conducted by a Boston think tank, so-called millennials, the demographic group born after 1981, are more socially and environmentally conscious than any previous generation.

Sixty-one percent said they “feel personally responsible for making a difference in the world.” A whopping 79 percent say they want to work for a company that benefits society, while 54 percent stated they would “refuse to work for an irresponsible corporation.”

“Katrina is absolutely . . . a generational marker,” Strauss said recently. “I’ve heard a lot of millennials say that the failure to prepare for Katrina, as well as the very problematic failed response to it, is an illus-

tration of the older generations not getting their act together on this, and they are committed to making sure that this doesn’t happen again.”

Shifting work attitudes

There’s a greater importance placed on the balance of life and work, and New Orleans’ traditionally easygoing pace combined with a newfound sense of recovery-driven urgency make it appear to be a perfect place to work and play.

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Building networks

Nathan Rothstein, 23, a native of Massachusetts, works three jobs, one as a recruiter for New Orleans College Prep Charter School, another developing the Newcomer Incentive Program for the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans, and an unpaid position developing the NOLA YURP Initiative, a Web site and non-profit dedicated to helping foster a strong community of young professionals in New Orleans.

In April, Rothstein founded a Web site to help young professionals network, share resources and find jobs in New Orleans. While The Idea Village prefers the term “vanguards,” Rothstein’s project caters to “YURPs,” or young urban rebuilding professionals.

“A lot of people who are contacting me are saying, ‘I’ve heard a lot about everything that’s going on down here, and it sounds really exciting.’ There’s this buzz,” he said. “I think there’s this energy that maybe young people can do things differently than the current generation. If we start unifying now, in the future, all of us will be more well-connected and . . . will be able to accomplish a lot more.”



Young Professionals Devoted to Rebuilding New Orleans

Wednesday, August 29, 2007

By Maggie Lineback

A few years back, the big acronym was “DINK,” for “double income, no kids.” In New Orleans, it’s “YURP,” for “Young Urban Recovery Professionals.” It’s a small but growing trend in the population here in New Orleans — young professionals who have moved to the city after Katrina to help it rebuild and grow.

It didn’t start as any kind of organized movement, but a group called “NOLA YURP” estimates there are at least 5,000 of these young people in the city. They range in age from 21 to 35 years old and come from all walks of life — they may be accountants or attorneys or architects. Some are young people who are from here. They may have gone to college out of state

and decided to settle someplace else. Now, many are finding their way back home to help their family and their city.

But there’s another segment of YURP who have no filial connection. NOLA YURP director Nathan Rothstein says it’s a common story. In the two years since Katrina hit, many college students had the opportunity to visit New Orleans on Spring Break volunteer trips. They saw a real need. Then, once they graduated, these same kids decided to relocate to New Orleans.

Why do these young people come here? Rothstein says many feel like they can have the most impact in New Orleans. They can really make a difference here. They can directly help people who need it and also feel like they’re a part of rebuilding a great American city.

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LEARN MORE:

www.nolayurp

a Web site and nonprofit dedicated to helping foster a strong community of young professionals in New Orleans.

likemind.us

a national networking movement with groups across the country who host monthly meet-and-greets for young, socially conscious professionals.

[The Idea Village](http://www.idv.annunciate.org)

www.idv.annunciate.org

The Idea Village is positioned at the heart of New Orleans’ brain gain. It’s a not-for-profit that helps to fund and support innovative entrepreneurial ventures to not just rebuild New Orleans, but to turn it into a world-class model city.

Local Media

www.nola.com (daily paper)

www.bestofneworleans.com (entertainment)

www.nolafugees.com (a satirical take)

La Fete News

www.lafetenews.com

“Bringing you the best event in New Orleans - daily” is this site’s mission, and they do. Sign up for the calendar e-list and you’ll never be at a loss for something to do.

www.alldaybuffet.org

alldaybuffet connects likeminded people by bringing together the things we like with the things that matter most. It describes itself as equal parts event filter, party planner, social network and think tank. “It’s a simple idea: Inspire Action. Change the world. Have Fun. Because doing good shouldn’t feel like a chore”

Tuesday, August 28, 2007
Taylor Gandossy, CNN

When Hurricane Katrina walloped New Orleans in late August 2005, Kate Schneiderman was in New York, 10 states and 1,100 miles away from the storm.

Fifteen months later, she traded New York's streets for those submerged during what the Federal Emergency Management Agency called the nation's worst natural disaster.

"I literally quit my job, bought a car, packed it up, drove down," Schneiderman, 24, told CNN. She said a college friend who was living in New Orleans persuaded her to quit her Wall Street job in financial communications -- a career that didn't make her happy and didn't fit her political science degree -- and move to New Orleans.

"It's the best decision I ever made," Schneiderman said.

Now nearly a year into her position as director of communications for New Orleans Councilman-at-Large Arnie Fielkow, the native New Yorker has become a self-described "grizzled veteran" of the Big Easy. She speaks affectionately of the city's people and of its slower pace, although she laughingly notes that she'll "never ever" get used to the city's soupy summer heat.

She says she's here for the long haul. "When I first moved down, I said, 'I'll give it two years...it'll be my little adventure.' And something sort of funny happened almost immediately," she said. "I felt immediately at home."

Schneiderman is one of many young professionals who have arrived in New Orleans since Hurricane



Kate Schneiderman, 24, is originally from New York, and works in politics in New Orleans.

Katrina ransacked the city, according to experts who study population trends in the area. Armed with college degrees and buoyed with seemingly boundless optimism and energy, these 20- and 30-year-olds have taken up work in various sectors of the community, ranging from business to politics, or in the several humanitarian programs helping to rebuild the city.

"From what you can tell in talking to people and looking at organizations...there does seem to be a significant influx of young, usually very well educated college graduates...who have come to New Orleans to help," said Tim Ryan, the University of New Orleans' chancellor. "Many have decided that this is an interesting place to live, and decide, at least for some short period of time, to stay here."

read more at
www.cnn.com/2007/US/08/28/katrina.braingain/

NEW ORLEANS' NEW ARRIVALS:

YOUNG, EDUCATED AND INFUSED WITH HOPE