

Alum's passions create strong city

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Peter Gold (LA '12, M *16)

Tulane alumnus Peter Gold's passion for making the world a better place is a longstanding one. It's what led him to Tulane University School of Medicine, where he became an orthopaedic surgeon, drawn by the opportunities the field offered for helping those with severe arthritis walk again.

That passion is an exceptionally rare quality, and the drive that enabled Gold (LA '12, M *16) to look beyond his own personal tragedy to uncover ways to help New Orleans' young people, was recognized by a national audience on the Today show this June.

In November 2015, Gold was a medical student at Tulane. Driving home after a long shift, he saw a man attempting to drag a woman into a SUV. Courageously, he interceded, only to be shot in the stomach by the assailant, who was later identified as Euric Cain. Cain attempted to end Gold's life, but, mercifully, the gun jammed, and Cain fled into the night.

While still recovering in the ICU, Gold took stock of his circumstances, wondering what could cause the brutality his life had been transformed by.

“We started talking right away about how somebody could act so violently, with so much ease. You have to think about what situations occur so that somebody got to that situation where they felt like the world was out to get them and nobody was ever going to be there to guide them,” Gold said on the Today show segment.

He was determined to change that. Gold founded Strong City to support community-based organizations who are making a difference in the lives of underserved young people — empowering them to achieve their dreams.

Strong City’s first community partner is the New Orleans-based Youth Empowerment Project (YEP), which engages underserved young people through community-based education, mentoring and employment readiness programs to help them develop their skills and strengthen their ties to family and community.

The Today show segment showed how Strong City has risen to the challenge of COVID-19.

With the help of Strong City, it wasn’t long before YEP was offering students cooking classes via Zoom. In the spring, the organization held a virtual graduation ceremony.

Gold recently spoke about his work with Strong City and the challenges coronavirus has posed for underserved young people on the Today show. “The families and youth that we serve, a lot of them don’t have Internet access, they don’t have computer access,” says Gold.

At the close of the segment, anchor Jenna Bush Hager revealed that Peter Gold’s work with Strong City is continuing to inspire individuals, communities and companies. In fact, the Verizon Foundation is donating \$10,000 to help Strong City provide for YEP’s tech needs this summer.