

# Entrepreneurial Ethos

by Mike Fitts



## Ready Responders

MARK ANDRESEN

In a serious emergency, even a minute delay in ambulance response can mean the difference between life and death. Cities across the world struggle to keep EMS response-time rates as low as possible. Factors like distance, traffic or weather cause delays in getting to a patient. Other times, some 911 callers don't end up needing emergency medical service, diverting resources that could be used elsewhere. Ultimately, requests for emergency medical help far surpass the amount of on-hand resources a city has available. How can we maximize emergency resources across a city to ensure every patient receives fast, effective and necessary care?

As usual, Tulane is on the forefront of finding solutions to critical questions. And one Tulane alum just came up with an idea that could get emergency medical care to more people, and cut the average ambulance response time to just five minutes.

Benjamin Swig, a 2016 graduate of the Executive MBA program at the A. B. Freeman School of Business (and a 2009 graduate of the Tulane School of Public Health) and his co-founder, Justin Dangel, came up with an idea a little over a year ago. Justin described a system he witnessed during a trip to Israel, where, in an emergency, trained first responders in the area rushed to the scene until an ambulance arrived. These responders applied first aid and lifesaving maneuvers to the victim.

Ben recognized the idea's potential to engage and "to mobilize and empower community members who are trained and who want to help others." He wondered if a similar model could work in the United States.

Ben and his partner went to work, and after a year, they were ready

### HEALTH CONNECTION

Ready Responders, a service developed by Benjamin Swig (PHTM '09, B '16), offers a cross-disciplinary approach to getting trained health professionals to people in emergency situations.

to show off their finished product: Ready Responders. Their creation consists of three core components.

In phase one, part-time emergency medical professionals receive a notification to their smartphone through an app when someone close by needs medical attention.

Then, in phase two, the responders communicate with a nurse via an integrated hotline in the app. The nurse is able to assist with medical triage and common health guidelines, dispense advice, and answer any questions.

Finally, in phase three, the patient and the responder connect to a nearby physician over a telehealth consultation to review the patient's vitals and physical ailments. At this point, the physician can help determine if the patient requires emergency medical treatment—or, alternately, if a simple trip to a general practitioner would do the trick.

This past March, the duo took their business to "The Big Idea" business competition, a crowdsourced pitch during the ninth annual New Orleans Entrepreneur Week. There, they won the grand prize—beating out 19 other hopefuls to take home \$25,000 in cash, as well as an additional \$30,000 from the Peter Mayer Advertising firm, in a separate contest the same night.

The trial phase of Ready Responders is set to go live in New Orleans within the next six to 12 months. Ultimately, Ben and Justin hope their model will impact health delivery systems all across the United States.

Ben's project is quintessentially Tulane. It merges business, public health, medicine, computer science, big data and more to create something that will directly change the world for the better. It's this outward-facing ethos that makes Tulane and its alumni so unique. And it's why our graduates become some of the strongest leaders and entrepreneurs in the nation. And we honor it every day in our groundbreaking research and tremendous community service efforts.

AOL co-founder Steve Case believes New Orleans is "poised to re-emerge as one of the great startup cities in the country, maybe even the world." I think he's right. And, as Tulane continues to serve as a prime incubator of urban innovation in higher education, I know we are in the perfect position to help lead that charge.