

Charting a New Course After Katrina

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Carewas always on the menu for Allison Shapiro Dandry (NC '03, G *06, B *16).

She came to Newcomb College with a history of volunteering under her belt and a plan to head to medical or veterinary school after graduation. At Newcomb, she swiftly found herself in a community of like-minded peers.

Shapiro Dandry completed her BS in neuroscience in 2003, continuing on for her MS in the field. When Hurricane Katrina made landfall in 2005, she was able to evacuate to California but the devastation of the storm changed everything.

“Katrina changed a lot for me. I didn’t end up going to medical school. I totally changed what I wanted to do. You want to get out and see the world and [after Katrina] I really just wanted to come back and make New Orleans better,” recalled Shapiro Dandry. She described her path as having been a winding one. While she didn’t end up becoming a doctor, her journey led her to a career that was profoundly impactful — both personally and professionally. Today, she remains dedicated to making New Orleans a better place.

The storm impacted her family’s business as well. Her father, Dan Shapiro, was an owner and executive vice president of Krispy Krunchy Chicken. When the storm hit, most of the stores were lost. The family was ultimately able to keep Krispy Krunchy operational through the kindness of vendors and even strangers. It was an impactful moment — one that helped set the brand, and later her, on a new course.

“It inspired us,” said Shapiro Dandry. The kindness and generosity they experienced transformed into a powerful source of motivation for her and her family, prompting Krispy Krunchy Chicken to develop a food truck program that could swiftly mobilize to bring hot meals to communities affected by natural disasters including hurricanes, tornadoes and fires.

Krispy Krunchy now had the capacity to mobilize their food truck and provide thousands of hot meals a day to families in the wake of a disaster, staying up to two weeks if needed and going directly to where support is needed most. In addition to natural disasters, the organization delivered more than 20,000 free meals to communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We could get into what Katrina taught us about what not to do, but we just looked at it and thought, ‘You know what — what can we do to be better?’”

Shapiro Dandry joined Krispy Krunchy in 2011 as director of communications and technology and in 2023 became executive director and board president of the Krispy Krunchy Foundation, leading its transition to an independent, New Orleans-centric nonprofit.

This July, Shapiro Dandry and her family took their commitment to the community to the next level. After raising nearly a million dollars collectively through their private and business efforts, the family officially launched the Shapiro Family Foundation. Their new foundation aims to create lasting positive change throughout New Orleans by addressing disparities in hunger relief and education access and equity. The foundation builds partnerships with local nonprofits that have deep connections to the community, helping to expand their reach, strengthen their programs and ultimately create lasting positive change throughout New Orleans.

Shapiro Dandry will also serve as the foundation's executive director. "This foundation isn't just an extension of our family's values — it's personal for me. I grew up understanding the importance of community investment, and this foundation is an opportunity to directly influence meaningful change in the city we love."

Though Shapiro Dandry's career is altogether different than what she first envisioned, she credits Newcomb as an essential part of her journey. Today she remains deeply connected through her ongoing work as a member of the Newcomb Alumnae Association Board of Directors.

"The education was wonderful but also learning from my cohort and those around me, Newcomb grads and Newcomb students, was wonderful. The people that you meet through [Newcomb] are some of the most understanding and caring. I know that I graduated with a better understanding of togetherness and giving back from a lot of the service learning projects, the forward thinking of professors, and some of the discussion topics."

"[At Newcomb] you learn more about who you want to be — not even a career — what kind of person you want to be. Newcomb really helped shape that in me." It's a quality that Shapiro Dandry sees thriving at Newcomb Institute.

"Obviously, we're in a new world, but there is still that sense of understanding, of wanting to learn and grow and figure out how we can be of best assistance. What I saw and what I see now are still the same vein of togetherness and giving back."

