

Denise Williams never imagined she'd use stroke education to save a life, just days after learning it.

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Denise Williams (left) attended a stroke awareness event, which featured a presentation by Tulane neurosurgeon Dr. Kendrick Johnson. A few days later, Williams recognized the signs in a fellow church member. Danny Moore (right) sent Williams a photo as he was being released from the hospital.

As the Housing Intake Coordinator for [A New Way of Life - New Orleans](#), Denise Williams supports formerly incarcerated women as they rebuild their lives and navigate multiple health challenges. On May 20, 2025, she attended the “Towards a Healthier Us” Stroke Awareness event, held at [Voice of the Experienced \(VOTE\)](#) and supported by [The Fit Clinic NOLA](#). The event featured a presentation by Tulane neurosurgeon Dr. [Kendrick Johnson](#), director of the [Tulane Stroke Outreach Program](#).

Williams said she found the session enlightening, particularly given her own family history of stroke and her age group’s increased risk. She had no idea how quickly that information would become vital.

The session taught Williams about the main signs of stroke and what to do if you see someone exhibiting symptoms, easy to remember with the acronym F.A.S.T.

Face: Does one side of the face droop when smiling?

Arms: Does one arm drift downward when raised?

Speech: Is speech slurred or difficult to understand?

Time: If you notice any of these signs, call 911 immediately!

“Just a few days later, I was at church when I noticed a close friend showing some subtle, strange signs, his fingers were twitching, his arm was moving oddly, and his speech was slurred,” Williams recalled. “Because of what I had just learned, I immediately recognized he was likely having a stroke and called 911.”

Her friend was rushed to the hospital, where he was treated in time to avoid lasting damage. He is now recovering and recently sent Williams a photo from his hospital bed with a big smile and heartfelt thanks.

“I never imagined how quickly that knowledge would become essential,” said Williams. “This experience reminded me how crucial these kinds of educational events are—not just for those we serve, but for our own lives and loved ones.”

If you want to learn how to act F.A.S.T., you can learn more at tulanestroke.com.