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JAN/FEB. 2019 Vol. 19 No. 42



PASEO BORICUA ARTS BUILDING (Pag.19)

A True TIFF Investment for the Community

- **24 Family Apartments for Artists**
- **26 Businesses**



CELEBRATED (Pp.4-7)
"A LO BORICUA"

Vida/SIDA 30th ANNIVERSARY GALA

LOS 3 SANTOS REYES MAGOS



25 AÑOS DE TRADICIÓN
Diáspora Puertorriqueña
en Chicago (Pp.8-11)

A NEW VISION WITH DEEP ROOTS FOR OUR COMMUNITY (Pag.12)



THE PUERTO RICAN Agenda

Ald. Maldonado

And

Puerto Rican Agenda

Recognize

ANCHORS OF PUERTO RICO TOWN



Wilfredo De Jesus
New Life Covenant Church



Paul Roldan
Hispanic Housing Corp.



José Sánchez
Norwegian American Hospital

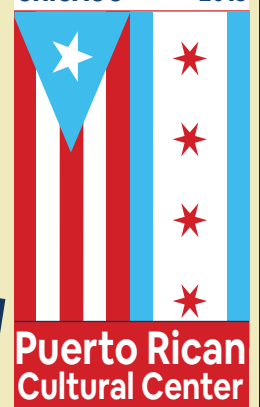


Jimmy Bousis
Central Park Produce



Mario Nieves Aquino
Pres. LAMA

PUERTO RICO TOWN
CHICAGO 2019



¡Boricua/Latinos Defiendan Lo Suyo!

¡El Barrio Es Nuestro, y No se Vende!

Vota El Martes 26 De Febrero De 6am A 7pm



ABOUT LA VOZ:

The most recent manifestation of Puerto Rican journalism in Chicago, La Voz del Paseo Boricua proudly continues in the legacy of our community's previous newspapers. Founded in 2004, La Voz del Paseo Boricua, or simply 'La Voz' as it is affectionately called by our readers, is a grassroots bilingual periodical published by the Juan Antonio Corretjer Puerto Rican Cultural Center. We report on stories relevant to our community on a monthly basis, disseminating news about local events, programs, resources, and developments. As an alternative source of media, we seek to acknowledge the achievements of the Puerto Rican community at large and to advocate for the preservation of the heart of our barrio in Humboldt Park - our "pedacito de patria" in Chicago.

SOBRE LA VOZ:

La más reciente manifestación del periodismo puertorriqueño en Chicago, La Voz del Paseo Boricua continúa orgullosa del legado de nuestros primeros periódicos. Fundado en 2004, La Voz del Paseo Boricua, o 'La Voz' según se le conoce cariñosamente por nuestros lectores, es un periódico de pueblo, publicado de manera bilingüe por el Centro Cultural Puertorriqueño Juan Antonio Corretjer. Mensualmente, divulga historias relevantes de nuestra comunidad, disseminando noticias sobre acontecimientos, programas, recursos, y progresos locales. Como fuente alternativa de medios, intentamos reconocer los logros de la comunidad puertorriqueña al igual que abogar por la preservación del corazón de nuestro barrio en el parque de Humboldt - nuestro "pedacito de patria" en Chicago.

HUMBOLDT PARK WOMEN RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR WORK IN THE COMMUNITY



From left: Glenda Guzmán, Joyce Chapman, and Judy Vázquez

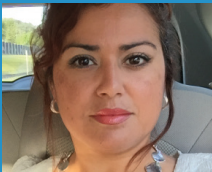
On December 1, 2018, Judy Vázquez and Glenda Guzmán were presented the "Women Empowered for Civic Engagement Award (WECE)". In an event with 200 people Judy and Glenda were awarded with 34 other women making a difference in their communities. Both Glenda and Judy were awarded for their work on the Local School Councils and their involvement in the Puerto Rican Community. As part of WECE's vision, the organization encourages all the recipients to recognize women in their community who are making a difference while building a movement to encourage women to take on greater leadership.

La Voz congratulates both Judy and Glenda as they represent the best of our community.

By Marvin García, Humboldt Park East Community Action Council Chair

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VICTORY FOR THE COMMUNITY

HUMBOLDT PARK ORGANIZERS SAVE HUB FOR PUERTO RICAN NEIGHBORS



Front line from left: Ald. Roberto Maldonado, State Senator Iris Martínez, Paul Roldan from Hispanic Housing, Charlie Serrano from The Puerto Rica Agenda.

The Hispanic Housing Development Corporation's purchase agreement for the Casa Puertorriqueña, a cultural anchor to the Puerto Rican community, was approved in bankruptcy court Thursday. The approved bid is slightly more than \$1 million, according to court documents.

The sale of Casa Puertorriqueña was used as a means of settling more than \$900,000 in debt that was accrued by the building's owners, The Puerto Rican Parade Committee — much of the debt stemming from mortgage and tax liens placed on the property. The site has served as a community center where seniors could receive social services and play dominoes and bingo. Also, youths held quinceañeras and parties there, and the homeless could get meals provided to them. Many feared the cultural hub they loved would be lost to gentrification because of the rampant luxury development in the neighborhood.

Paul Roldán, president and CEO of Hispanic Housing Development Corporation, said he is hoping the deal can be finalized within 30 days so the group can start planning what to do with the property. He didn't specify what would be done with the property but hinted at a new multiunit development with affordable housing.

Roldán said the purchasing of the site is vital to the fight against gentrification along Paseo Boricua — the microcosm of the Chicago Puerto Rican community along Division Street between Western Avenue and California Avenue. Casa Puertorriqueña is located at the end of the strip at 1237 N. California Ave.

"We are interested in this building because we have an interest in a number of projects along Paseo Boricua and want to anchor the community that is there now and send a message that we are here to stay," Roldán said. Community organizers and political leaders celebrated the sale's approval Thursday afternoon in front of Casa Puertorriqueña.

The Puerto Rican Agenda, a nonprofit group advocating for the Puerto Rican community in Chicago, has been behind the efforts to save the building from outside developers. Charlie Serrano, a co-chair of the organization, said there were few people that believed they could find a way to save it.

"It is critical to have institutions that continue on promoting the culture, the people and the history of the Puerto Rican community in this area," Serrano said.

Ald. Roberto Maldonado (26) said at least a

dozen developers placed a bid on the property when it first moved into bankruptcy court.

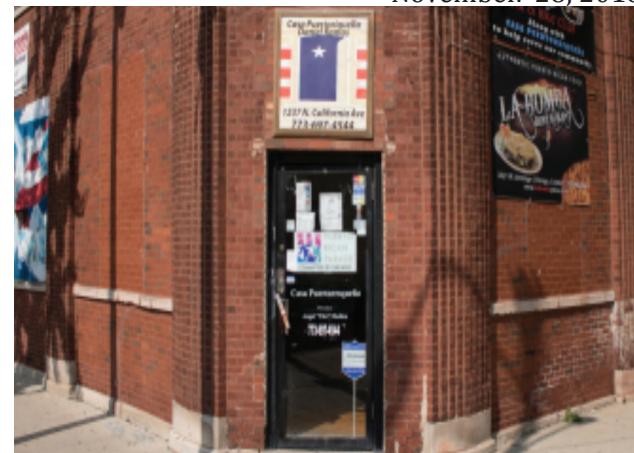
"They all wanted this precious piece of land [for] what they thought was going to be high-priced condominiums across the street from this beautiful, second largest park," Maldonado said. "This park has always been known as 'Humboldt Park, part of the Puerto Rican community,' and we are going to make sure it will always be known as 'Humboldt Park, part of the Puerto Rican community.'"

Ramon Moreno, 64, has lived in Humboldt Park for more than 40 years and said he is relieved the property will be going to a developer that is community oriented. "I was devastated when I heard the building was being sold without anyone notifying us first," Moreno said. "This is a community house. This is our community, it is not just a building. It is an icon to us."

The Puerto Rican Parade Committee has operated out of the 7,000-square-foot Casa Puertorriqueña for years. But Roldán said once the sale is finalized the committee will no longer occupy the space. The beleaguered organization's problems have not all been solved as its board members are still being investigated by Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan's office. On Thursday, Eileen Boyce, an AG's spokesperson, said they are still investigating the organization for potential violations of Illinois Charitable Organization Laws.

By Manny Ramos

Originally published in the Chicago Sun-Times, November. 28, 2018



Casa Puertorriqueña on California

MORE THAN 200 ATTENDED

Vida/SIDA 30th ANNIVERSARY GALA

30 Years of Living and Helping to Live



The Vida/SIDA Programs of The Puerto Rican Cultural Center (PRCC) celebrated an elegant 30th Anniversary Gala on Saturday, December 1st, 2018 at Gallery 3949 in Chicago. The sold-out event was an unforgettable evening for staff, friends, partners and special guests.

But let's get to know more about the history of HIV/AIDS in the Puerto Rican community of Chicago.

More than 30 years ago, the Puerto Rican community of Chicago was ravaged by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The world was fearful of this growing epidemic. Some survivors never received help, nor did they receive education regarding prevention, which would have decreased subsequent HIV transmission. Countless families lost their sons and daughters without help. They were rejected and received grossly inadequate services or no services at all. Many died a silent death.

At the beginning of the 80s, people did not have the medical services nor the medication to manage their HIV condition. Many of them died battling inhumane conditions on the streets of Chicago. At that time many Puerto Ricans, other Latinx and, African Americans were not receiving adequate medical attention.

In 1988, several members of the Puerto Ri-

can Cultural Center founded Vida/SIDA with the objective to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate HIV prevention services to Latinx and other marginalized people such as lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender individuals, and queer (LGBTQ), as well as others who were at high risk of contracting the virus.

"In our program, we dignify people who live with AIDS and we provide programs and alternatives to help them. We have a community that accepts the different sexual expressions," said José E. López, Executive Director of the PRCC.

The event started with a red carpet hosted by Ricardo Jiménez and Alianys Leyra Lalique, followed by a silent auction of art pieces. Nellie's Restaurant catered the delicious Puerto Rican cuisine: arroz con gandules, carne guisada con papas, fresh salad, and an assortment of Puerto Rican pastries.

Dr. Jesús Hernández Burgos, Director of Public Health Initiatives of the PRCC, emceed the ceremony and announced the awards of the evening.

The alluring voice of Cassandra Figueroa enthralled the attendees with her power-

ful rendition of "La Borinqueña", the National Anthem of Puerto Rico.

López gave a message that honored the lives of our departed loved ones and the survivors of HIV/AIDS. He addressed the stigma that the Puerto Rican community suffered thirty years ago. López also emphasized the importance of continuing to offer health services with equality and dignity for all human beings.

Lisa Isadora Cruz, activist and trans gender woman, delighted the audience with a monologue about a gorgeous jibarita who migrated to the United States. At the end, the character recited the poem "Majestad Negra", written by the Puerto Rican poet, Luis Palés Matos. Her performance was met with a thunderous applause. Cruz works as an Intervention Facilitator for the TRANS Chicago program.

At the gala, some employees received special achievement awards for their dedication and commitment to the organization: Sara González, José "Anthua" Ortiz, Stacy Epps, Dorian Ortega, Geovanna Candelaria, Leo-



(Continuation on p.6)

Vida/SIDA GALA



ny Calderón, and attorney Melinda Power, who provided Vida/SIDA her West Town Law Office during the evenings for the first years of Vida/SIDA's operations. Also, Kamill Amalia Torres and Maya Lozano were given the Young Outstanding Achievement Award. Meanwhile, Juan Calderón and Lisa Isadora Cruz, Ricardo Jiménez received the Lifetime Achievement Outstanding Award.

The Keynote Speaker was Luis V. Gutiérrez, U.S. Congressman 4th District, who exhorted the community to continue the fight against HIV and the prejudices that still exist in the minds of people. Gutiérrez

received a special achievement for his support to the PRCC programs.

After the program, the music of Orquesta Leal made everyone dance until the early morning hours.

The sponsors of the event were GILEAD, AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Erie Family Health Centers, Howard Brown Health, Norwegian American Hospital, Nellie's Restaurant, and Dr. Milady Velázquez of Spine and Body Health.

By Javier Valentín, La Voz del Paseo Boricua

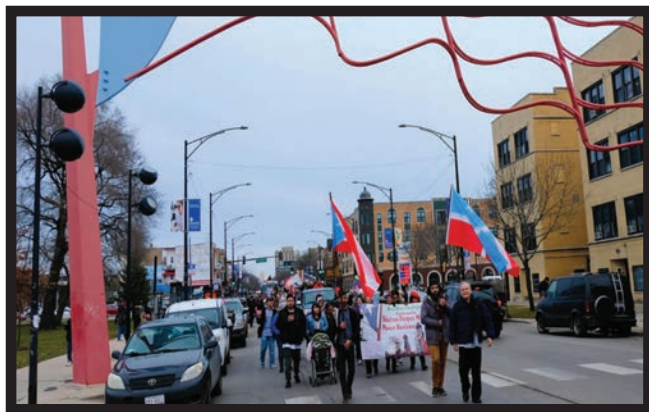
EL BARRIO

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25 Años de Reyes en Humboldt Park



EL SIGUIENTE ARTÍCULO FUE PUBLICADO EN EL PERIÓDICO HOY EL 2 DE ENERO DEL 2019:

Para los puertorriqueños, la tradición de festejar a Los Tres Reyes Magos tiene un significado más fuerte que para otros latinoamericanos, al menos así lo demuestran en Chicago con el desfile anual de Reyes, el cual cumple 25 años realizándose en el vecindario de Humboldt Park.

Desde 1994, los puertorriqueños en el norte de la ciudad se reúnen en el Paseo Boricua para homenajear a los Santos Reyes cada 6 de enero.

Los Reyes Magos de Puerto Rico son considerados a nivel popular santos.

“En el imaginario puertorriqueño los Reyes Magos son bien importantes. Tú podrías decir que Los Reyes Magos entre los puertorriqueños son como la Virgen de Guadalupe para los mexicanos”, comentó José López, co-fundador del Centro Cultural Puertorriqueño, 2546 W. Di-

vision St., uno de los organizadores del festival.

En Puerto Rico, las celebraciones para Los Reyes comienzan inmediatamente después de Nochebuena. Se llevan casi dos semanas de preparativos, lo que incluye cantarle rosarios a Los Reyes, en vez de rezarlos, entre familia, explicó López.

También hacen “promesas” a Los Magos, cuando se les promete una recompensa o una forma de agradecimiento a los Santos por cumplir las peticiones a los creyentes, y hacen “parrandas” en las cuales la gente va cantando de casa en casa.

López explica que la tradición lleva algunos 500 años desde que Puerto Rico se iba formando después de la conquista española, en la que llegaron esclavos africanos con el conquistador Cristóbal Colón.

Cuando empezaron a elaborar imágenes religiosas en la isla, los africanos eran los que tallaban la madera para producir los santos, y el único santo negro que los africanos reconocían en ese entonces fue Melchor, el Rey negro, indicó. Entre los puertorriqueños, los tres santos siempre caminan uno al lado del otro, pero siempre con el rey negro en medio, enfatizó López. Los puertorriqueños representan a los Reyes Magos (Melchor, Gaspar, y Baltasar) en caballos españoles “de paso fino”, no en camellos. Logísticamente, ha sido sumamente difícil obtener caballos finos para el desfile religioso, por eso los Tres Reyes Magos de Humboldt Park siempre van montados en una carroza jalada por un caballo. Y el personaje de Melchor no siempre es negro, “a veces es trigueño.”El desfile tiene lugar “de bandera a bandera”, el domingo a las 3pm en la Division y Campbell, y cul-

mina en Humboldt Park Fieldhouse. Ahí se repartirán entre 1,500 y 3,000 regalos a los niños de la comunidad de entre 0 a 12 años. El Centro Cultural Puertorriqueño colecta juguetes a lo largo del año, con la ayuda del Latin American Motorcycle Association (LAMA), Toys 4 Tots, el concejal Roberto Maldonado (D-26), y el grupo de comerciantes puertorriqueños conocido como Division Street Business Development (DSBD).

El Centro Cultural Puertorriqueño además organiza el desfile más grande de ese vecindario, el Desfile del Pueblo, que cumplió



40 años en la calle Division en el verano. “La cultura está en peligro” de perderse porque “lo hemos visto y lo estamos viendo” por el desplazamiento en Lincoln Park, Wicker Park, West Town y Logan Square, explicó López, de 69 años. Eso lo hace “sumamente importante mantener nuestras tradiciones”, considera el activista.

Por Jacqueline Serrato

PARADA DE LOS SANTOS REYES: Celebrando Una Tradición Boricua



El 6 de enero de 2019, el Centro Cultural Puertorriqueño (PRCC) celebró la edición 25 del tan esperado Día de Reyes, que tuvo lugar en el Fieldhouse de Humboldt Park. Hasta allí llegaron los niños en compañía de sus padres para recibir el tan esperado regalo a manos de los Tres Reyes Magos de Oriente: Gaspar, Melchor y Baltasar.

Este año, la actividad fue dedicada a los refugiados del huracán María que recientemente se establecieron en la ciudad de Chicago.

El evento inició con una marcha por toda la Division Street en la que se unieron vecinos, empleados e invitados

para celebrar este día tan especial, en compañía de los Tres Magos de Oriente. Tres integrantes del Latin American Motorcycle Association (LAMA) fueron las personas seleccionadas para encarnarlos.

Además de los tan esperados regalos a manos de los Reyes, como parte de una rifa se obsequiaron tres docenas de bicicletas de West Town Bikes y Ciclo Urbano, para niños entre las edades de 10 a 12 años.

El evento contó con el auspicio de Alderman Roberto Maldonado, El Centro Cultural Puertorriqueño (PRCC), Division Street Development Association (DSBDA), Latin American Motorcycle Association (LAMA), West Town Bikes, the Chicago Park District y Toys for Tots.

3 KINGS PARADE ON PASEO BORICUA



WHO ARE THE 3 KINGS?

A COLORFUL AND UNIQUE ISLAND HERITAGE: 25 YEARS OF A DIASPORA TRADITION



Within a festive, colorful and unique Puerto Rican experience, the Greater Humboldt Park Community celebrated its 25th Annual 3 Kings Day Festival/Parade on Paseo Boricua. The festivities began at 3 pm on Division and Campbell, when the 3 Wise Men and Alderman Roberto Maldonado, on horse carriages, led a parade of hundreds upon hundreds of children and parents along the culturally vibrant Paseo Boricua, while hundreds more viewed from sidewalks and cars. The Parade made its way to the Humboldt Park Field House where nearly 1,500 children were greeted by the Three Kings, and gifts were distributed by the members of Latin American Motorcycle Association (LAMA).

Traditional Puerto Rican music, featuring Grupo Tumbao, delighted them. They were also able to savor the hot chocolate provided by Dark Matter Coffee. Additionally, two Puerto Rican artists, Roger Ramos and Luz Méndez, showcased their artistry, and the Chicago School of Mosaics engaged many in piecing together a mosaic, which will be installed in Humacao, Puerto Rico in February.

The Three Kings - who in the Puerto Rican tradition are known as Los Santos Reyes Magos - were represented by members of LAMA. This year, the role of Melchor was taken by Mario Nieves Aquino, International President of LAMA and recently named Honorary Chief in Nigeria. In

the Puerto Rican imaginary Melchor is the Black King who is the wisest of the three - because as they travelled side by side, he took his place in the middle, thus leading them, while following the star to the Epiphany (enlightenment).

The importance of the 3 wise men is so profound that after the US invasion of Puerto Rico, every school in Puerto Rico had to sponsor Santa Claus on Dec. 24 - so he became the gift giver thereby replacing the 3 Kings.

The Tres Santos Reyes Magos are deeply rooted in the Puerto Rican cultural imagination. Following the Spanish takeover of Borinken (as the native

(Continuation on p.11)





Taino people called the island), African slaves were brought to the island. Given the rich skills, which many African slaves brought as wood carvers from Africa, they soon became the master wood carvers (creating most of the figures in the Catholic Churches, and for the more popular home based nichos - altars). As they carved the figures, they had to learn the particularity of each saint. These santeros (saint carvers), in actual fact, created their own saints informed by their imagination; thus soon popularly dubbing the Three Wise Men as Los Santos Reyes Magos. The veneration for these wise men can be explained with the fact that the Africans brought to the Americas were denied the knowledge of their heritage. Soon, the only Black King they knew anything about

was Melchor. The santeros began to depict the wise men with the following characteristics: 1) they rode on horses not camels; 2) they rode not just on any horses but Paso Fino horses (descendents of the Arabic/Moorish horses introduced by the Spanish Conquerors); 3) they rode side by side, and Melchor (the Black King) was always placed in the middle - traditionally, any time three travel alongside each other, it is the one in the middle who leads - therefore, he was the wisest who followed the star of aurora, that guided them to the baby Jesus - to be enlightened (Epiphany). Melchor, the Black King, rode a white horse thus flipping the script of racism.

It is no wonder that for nearly 500 years,

Puerto Ricans have venerated and honored Los Santos Reyes Magos on the 6th of January- with promesas (petitions), rosarios cantados (chanted rosaries), and celebrations, transforming this day into a truly spiritual and cultural legacy of the Island's heritage. Furthermore, the children, following their own tradition, would place boxes with grass for the horses under their beds, and the next day they found gifts from the Magos.

It is within that rich cultural tradition that for the past 25 years Chicago's Greater Humboldt Park Community has celebrated El Día de los Tres Santos Reyes Magos.

By la Voz del Paseo Boricua

Ald. Maldonado and Puerto Rican Agenda Recognize Community Pillars With **"ANCHORS OF PUERTO RICO TOWN" AWARD**



Jessie Fuentes, co-Chair Puerto Rican Agenda, and Ald. Roberto Maldonado

On Saturday, February 2nd, nearly 60 members of The Puerto Rican Agenda (Agenda) gathered for their monthly general meeting hosted at New Life Covenant Church Humboldt Park Campus. General meetings are open to the public and serve to provide updates on Agenda initiatives, as well as share outcomes of resettlement efforts and aid provided to Puerto Rico as a result of Hurricane Maria. Building on two topics from the December meeting, the February meeting continued dialogues with mayoral candidates including Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and Lori Lightfoot (December meeting featured Gery Chico and Amara Enyia) and honoring community pillars that historically preserved the Puerto Rican presence and influence of Humboldt Park through an awards ceremony.

The Agenda's Housing Committee has worked on strategic initiatives to operationalize community-driven efforts to ensure that a robust and thriving Puerto Rican community exists for generations to come. After a successful Housing Summit that attracted 300 community members



Campus Pastor Jamie Navarro receiving Award on behalf of Wilfredo de Jesús and New Life Covenant Church

and local elected officials members of the Committee proposed Ald. Maldonado to introduce a resolution to City Council that would designate the area, on Division St. (the historical heart of Chicago's Puerto Rican's community), from Western to Grand Ave., as "Puerto Rico Town" (thus ensuring a new vision with deep roots for our community). The resolution was adopted by City Council in November 2018. It calls for the Illinois General Assembly to designate the area as a Special Purpose District that would constitute a "Cultural Sanctuary".

In celebration of having the resolution adopted by the City Council, the Division Street Business Association (DSBDA) and Agenda performed a soft unveiling of the Puerto Rico Town banners that will soon be displayed on the light posts throughout Paseo Boricua. Additionally, five key leaders and organizations, which have been pillars of Humboldt Park for more than 30 years, were recognized and honored with the Anchors of Puerto Rico Town Awards.



Eduardo Arocho- Ex. Dir. DSBDA, Jessie Fuentes, Paul Rodan - Hispanic Housing, and Ald. Maldonado

Wilfredo de Jesús, Pastor of New Life Covenant Church, and the church itself, both received an award for the deep commitment to our community as the "Church for the Hurting" and for acting as an "anchor for Puerto Rico Town" as the largest Latino faith-based institution in Chicago. The award was received by the church's Assistant Pastor in De Jesús' absence.

The next award was given to Paul Roldán and Hispanic Housing Development Corporation for his and the institution's deep commitment to provide quality, affordable housing to our seniors and to our community at large. His profound sense of commitment to the community and Puerto Rico Town was recently manifested in his role of assuming ownership of the Casa Puertorriqueña building, which ensure its future as a community and by envisioning a new affordable housing development on the corner of Division and California. His vision of collective aesthetics is exemplified through the beautifully architectural

(Continuation on Pg. 13)



Mayoral candidates Toni Preckwinkle-Cook County Board President, and Lori Lightfoot



Jessie Fuentes and José Sanchez of Norwegian American Hospital



Eduardo Arocho, Ex. Dir. DSBDA, Jessie Fuentes, Jose Luis Rodriguez (LAMA) and Ald. Maldonado

rendering of the Teresa Roldán Apartments. Paul Roldán, again reaffirmed his deep commitment by saying "Whatever time I have left I will spend it building Puerto Rico Town."

The third honoree was Mario Nieves Aquino, International President of Latin American Motorcycle Association (LAMA), for his leadership in promoting cycling as a community building and cross cultural process, and for serving as the Ambassador of Puerto Rico Town throughout the world. The award was received by José Luis Rodríguez member of LAMA who announced that LAMA was in the process of moving its Chicago Chapter office back to Humboldt Park in order to support the community even more.

José Sánchez (CEO) and the institution he serves, Norwegian American Hospital (Norwegian), were presented the Anchor for Puerto Rico Town award. Norwegian serves as an economic engine of our community as it is the largest employer in the Greater Humboldt Park area. Moreover, Norwegian American Hospital is the birthplace of thousands of Humboldt Park residents, and particularly of some of our more well-known community leaders. Sánchez's leadership and vision for future development as part of the Wellness District will further anchor Puerto Rico Town. Sánchez expanded on the developments Norwegian American Hospital has been working on such as "training 18 residents who will practice medicine in the community". Additionally, he was very proud to share that Norwegian Hospital's Children Mobile Clinic was able to see 3,000 children last year providing wellness to many Humboldt Park families.

The last award was given to Jimmy Bousis and Central Park Produce, for being purveyors of Puerto Rican products and produce for decades; for his unwavering commitment to the Chicago Puerto Rican community in times of need; and for serving as a commercial hub for Puerto Rico Town.

After these recognitions, local elected officials Senator Iris Martinez, State Representative Delia Ramírez, and Cook County Commissioner Luis Arroyo Jr. shared their views of Puerto Rico Town. They reaffirmed how essential this project would be in order to counter aggressive gentrification efforts in our community. Senator Martinez powerfully declared, "We will continue to multiply in this community!" Similarly, Representative Ramírez, who three weeks ago was officially inaugurated into the Illinois House of Representatives, affirmed, "We are not going anywhere, Humboldt Park NO SE VENDE!", making reference to the title of the play about gentrification that was premiered at Urban Theater last September, 2018.

By Cristina Pacione-Zeyas
Co-Chair Puerto Rican Agenda

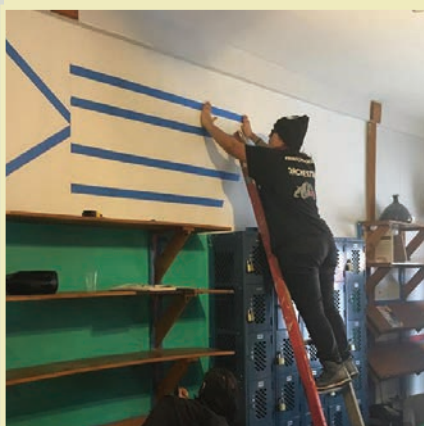
UNA COLORIDA TARDE EN EL RESCATE

Trans Chicago comparte con Jóvenes Residentes

Siempre es lindo compartir con quien nos necesita. Este sábado, 2 de febrero, empleados del programa de TRANS Chicago, le prepararon un almuerzo a los jóvenes residentes de EL RESCATE, hogar que acoge a jóvenes que son abandonados por sus padres y por sus familiares,

entre los que se encuentran jóvenes LGBTQ. Además, Nathalie Tirado, Coordinadora del Trans Chicago, colaboró con las pinturas que se hicieron en la nueva decoración del centro.

La Voz del Paseo Boricua





HITN SE UNE AL EVENTO:

El miércoles 12 de diciembre, el alcalde de Comerío, el Honorable Josian Santiago, acompañado por su equipo y la directora de comunicaciones, Dianna Torres-Díaz, hizo posible dar regalos a los niños de Comerío durante esta temporada navideña. En este esfuerzo asistieron el Gerente General, José Hernández, Gerente de Iniciativas Financiadas, Yanira Meléndez de la oficina de HITN Puerto Rico y L. Alejandro Molina, de la sede del canal de televisión HITN en Nueva York. También asistieron la abogada, Carmen Hernández, y su hermana, Evelyn Hernández, ambas de Chicago.

Un grupo de personajes infantiles, músicos y pleneros acompañaron al Alcalde y sus invitados mientras visitaban las escuelas públicas de Comerío, donde se entregaban juguetes a todos los niños. Grandes sonrisas y felicidad irradiada por los niños mientras se distribuían los juguetes en las siguientes escuelas:

- Escuela Oscar Porrata Doria Especializada en Idiomas
- Escuela Elemental Inés María Mendoza Programa Montessori
- Escuela Elemental Claudio Ferrer Cotto

- Escuela Segunda Unidad Luis Muñoz Marín
- Escuela Segunda Unidad Ramón Alejandro Ayala
- Escuela Segunda Unidad María del Carmen Santiago
- El Programa Pre Escolar Paraíso Infantil, donde también hay programa de iPads auspiciado por HITN

El alcalde Josian Santiago agradeció al canal HITN y a su presidente y CEO, Michael D. Nieves, y a las hermanas Hernández por apoyar esta tremenda iniciativa municipal que se ha llevado a cabo durante los últimos años con el propósito de asegurar que cada niño de Comerío tenga un regalo en Navidad.

SOBRE HITN

HITN-TV es la compañía líder de medios en idioma español, enfocada en programación educativa y cultural para toda la familia. Alcanza a más de 44 millones a través de los EE. UU y Puerto Rico por DIRECTV, DISH Network, AT&T U-verse TV, Verizon FiOS TV, Comcast, Charter Spectrum, Frontier Mediacom, CenturyLink Prism, y Cablevision. Para más información, visite www.hitn.org



Estudiantes de Escuela Pública de Comerío recibiendo regalos de Navidad auspiciados por HITN

COMERIO Y CHICAGO UNIDOS PARA PRESERVAR LA TROVA PUETORRIQUENA

La risa y alegría de los niños del pueblo de Comerío engalanaban el escenario para recibir el Primer Regalo de Navidad que su alcalde, el honorable Josian Santiago Rivera y la comunidad boricua de Chicago, representados por el Sr. Alejandro Molina y otros distinguidos hermanos de la diáspora, les entregaban personalmente. Pero, también la Escuela de la Trova de Comerío y la cultura puertorriqueña recibieron un gran regalo de ambas entidades en aquella amena tarde.

Ante la importancia de defender y promover nuestra música, el arte de la trova, la improvisación y la construcción de la décima, el Centro Cultural Cirilo W. Meijers solicitó ayuda económica al Gobierno Municipal y al NATL BORICUA HUMAN RIGHTS NET. Con gran regocijo su ayuda fue inmediata y el 12 de diciembre de 2018, ante la nutrida participación de los niños y niñas de Comerío, el Sr. Molina y el alcalde, Josian Santiago, hicieron entrega cada uno de un cheque de \$1,500.00 dólares que permitirán mantener la Escuela de la Trova ofreciendo servicios libre de costos a niños de escasos recursos, todos sobrevivientes del Huracán María.

La Escuela de la Trova de Comerío fue fundada en el año 2011 por el reconocido trovador comerieño, Miguel A. Santiago Díaz. Es una entidad sin fines de lucro afiliada al Centro Cultural Cirilo W. Meijers. En tan solo 7 años de fundación ya han sido impactados 160 niños, de 6 a 18 años de edad, tanto residentes de Comerío como de diferentes pueblos de la isla. Los estudiantes de la Escuela de la Trova han representado nuestra música con gran acogida en múltiples actividades, tanto locales como en el extranjero. La Escuela de la Trova carece de presupuesto y necesita de ayuda económica. Para continuar defendiendo nuestra cultura necesitamos mantener la escuela de niños trovadores ABIERTA. Todas las aportaciones pueden ser enviadas al Centro Cultural Cirilo W. Meijers o comunicarse con la Sra. Gloria E. Berrios, Presidenta, al teléfono 787- 688- 2148. Por Puerto Rico!!

By Gloria Berrios,
Centro Cultural Cirilo W. Meijers

LOIZA ROMPE RECORD DE ESTUDIANTES EN CUADRO DE HONOR



Hay alegría en la comunidad escolar de Loíza y es que en la reciente celebración de la ceremonia del cuadro de honor de la Escuela Superior Vocacional de Loíza, se reconocieron a 176 estudiantes de los grados décimo a duodécimo. “Estamos más que satisfechos con los logros de nuestros estudiantes, quienes demuestran una vez más que hay un gran futuro para Loíza. Mis felicitaciones a todos los destacados”, expresó la alcaldesa Julia Nazario Fuentes en un momento de la ceremonia celebrada en la cancha de dicha escuela pública.

De otro lado, la alcaldesa anunció a los presentes que ya está en curso la iniciativa municipal para adquirir aires acondicionados para algunos de los salones que no cuentan con esa facilidad.

“Esta escuela, que fue inaugurada hace ocho años, se creó para tener aire en todas las unidades y debido al paso del huracán María sufrió daños que requieren reparaciones mayores y vamos ayudar con eso”, dijo Nazario Fuentes quien para el año 2017 inició operaciones de la Oficina del Comisionado Escolar del Municipio de Loíza entidad que sirve de contacto para canalizar las necesidades de las escuelas. Por último Nazario aseguró que “en estos tiempos en que se cuestiona la pertinencia del aparato municipal, aquí tenemos un ejemplo de lo que estamos haciendo, no solamente con las escuelas, también en otras áreas”.

Originalmente publicado por Redacción elvocero.com, enero 17, 2019

IV CONFERENCIA INTERNACIONAL POR EL EQUILIBRIO DEL MUNDO

Del 28 al 31 de enero de 2019, se estuvo celebrando en La Habana, Cuba la IV Conferencia Internacional por el Equilibrio del Mundo. La conferencia “es un foro multidisciplinario y plural para promover el intercambio de ideas entre intelectuales de las más disímiles corrientes de pensamiento, procedentes de distintas instituciones y países, convocado por el Proyecto José Martí de Solidaridad Internacional”. Sus participantes se enriquecieron con ponencias sobre diversos temas de gran relevancia como cambio climático, igualdad de género, salud, alimentos, educación, ética, descolonización, el pensamiento de José Martí, movimientos sociales, situaciones político económicas de los países, el proyecto imperialista en América Latina, los 60 años de la Revolución Cubana, la Revolución Bolivariana, independencia de Puerto Rico, entre muchos otros.

En la conferencia participaron delegaciones de más de 60 países, incluyendo a Puerto Rico con la representación de Oscar López Rivera, luchador independentista puertorriqueño, Alejandro Torres Rivera, miembro del Movimiento Independentista Nacional Hostosiano de Puerto Rico y ex presidente del Colegio de Abogados y Abogadas de Puerto Rico, Olga Sanabria, activista boricua en la ONU y estudiantes de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, como deponentes.

La apertura del evento inició con una conferencia magistral sobre “Geopolítica de la posverdad. La guerra de la información en la era de los fake news.” En la misma el Dr. Ignacio Ramonet expuso con gran precisión y detalle la forma en que se utilizan los medios de comunicación por parte de la claqué dominante imperialista para manipular la opinión

pública con hechos falsos, desarrollar campañas mediáticas corruptas y conseguir objetivos políticos, económicos y sociales de forma ilegítima.

Todas las conferencias estuvieron enmarcadas en la solidaridad entre los pueblos, así como la unidad necesaria y la lucha que hay que continuar librando ante el desequilibrio en aspectos políticos, económicos, sociales, climáticos, soberanía y justicia. Durante las conferencias, destacó la solidaridad hacia el hermano pueblo de Venezuela, ante el ultraje de Estados Unidos a su dignidad y soberanía con el reconocimiento de un presidente no electo y la amenaza casi inminente de una intervención militar. Ello, cuando la mayoría del pueblo venezolano escogió a su Presidente, Nicolás Maduro, bajo un proceso legítimo de elecciones. Se volcó también la solidaridad hacia el preso político Lula da Silva, ex presidente de Brasil, quien a través de un procedimiento fabricado se encuentra cumpliendo pena de cárcel por alegados actos de corrupción que no han sido probados con evidencia alguna que lo ate a los mismos.

Tanto la situación venezolana y la del ex presidente Lula son vivos ejemplos de cómo los llamados “fake news” y las construcciones mediáticas falsas pueden lograr las más grandes injusticias bajo el estado de derecho actual. La solidaridad hacia el gobierno de Nicaragua y la lucha por la independencia de Puerto Rico fueron también tema de discusión.

Cónsono con el tema emblemático de la conferencia, el equilibrio del mundo, Oscar López Rivera, enfatizó en la necesidad urgente de articular un movimiento fuerte de solidaridad entre los pueblos. En cuanto al tema de Puerto Rico, expuso

sobre el daño tan grande que le ha hecho el gobierno de Estados Unidos a su Patria manteniendo su injerencia directa en el pueblo durante 120 años de atropellante coloniaje. A pesar de lo anterior y teniendo pleno conocimiento sobre la precaria situación en su pueblo y a nivel mundial, es creyente férreo de que “un mundo mejor y más justo es posible.” López sostiene que podemos lograrlo y exhortó a la juventud que continúen la lucha por ese mundo mejor, por el equilibrio del mundo, por erradicar el imperialismo para que logremos tener, vivir en un mundo mejor y más justo. Claro está, afirmó que ese mundo mejor “es posible si nos atrevemos todas y todos a luchar. Hay suficiente amor en el corazón de todo ser humano que cree en la libertad y la justicia para parar todas las injerencias de los países imperialistas en nuestros países.”

Quienes participaron del evento salieron con gran energía para continuar luchando por un mundo mejor, más justo y equilibrado.

By Susset Santos Cotto



TIAGO'S WORK FEATURE IN INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC ART PROJECT



West Palm Beach, FL – December 6th, 2018 - TIAGO (Richard Santiago) was invited to participate in the international public art exhibition, New Monuments for New Cities. It will be visiting 5 cities in North America during 2019. New Monuments for New Cities is the inaugural project of the New York High Line Network Joint Initiative, a new collaboration between industrial reuse projects in North America. New Monuments for New Cities is a public art exhibition that will travel through the United States and Canada during 2019. Five urban reuse projects that are part of the High Line Network invited five artists or groups of artists to create proposals (in form of posters) for new monuments. Each participating place will produce an exhibition of the 25 works of art, specific to their site. The participating cities include:

- Buffalo Bayou, Houston, Texas; February - April, 2019
- Waller Creek, Austin, Texas; March - May, 2019
- The 606, Chicago, Illinois; May - July, 2019.
- The Bentway, Toronto, Ontario; May - August, 2019.
- The High Line, New York, New York; September - October, 2019

"This was conceived last year, during the elimination of Confederate monuments, and after what happened here in New York with the commission that evaluated the monuments," said Cecilia Alemani, who is the director and chief curator of High Line Art. "I really felt that there was something in the air that was worth capturing." The national debate on monuments, plaques and memorials has often focused on Confederate figures such as John C. Calhoun and Robert E. Lee. Following a violent rally of white nationalists in Charlottesville, Virginia, dozens of monuments were eliminated in the United States. In New York, the most heated debate was about the statue of Christopher Columbus that stands on Columbus Circle. Many called for its elimination due to the exploitation and brutality of Columbus towards the indigenous peoples, but it was defended by some Americans of Italian origin as an important part of their heritage. "There is so much hope and optimism in the Friends of the High Line project, of wanting to create green spaces from nothing or something that was supposed to be demolished," said Ms. Alemani. "And art is now an important component of that experience".

TIAGO is the only Puerto Rican artist invited to participate along with artists of the caliber of Guerrilla Girls, Hans Haacke, Nicole Awai, and Judith Bernstein among others. "Over the past few years, I have concentrated on creating collective art projects that focus on social issues and revolve around the concept of empathy and solidarity. This invitation came at a time when I am displaced by the hurricane but working hard to keep the Puerto Rican issue on the table," explained Tiago.

The artist has been presenting different formats of his installation The Frailty of Strength and vice versa since May in various places in the United States that include The Museum of Contemporary Art of Chicago, Rutgers University, and Connecticut College. It deals with the 911 cremations by the government of Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria. However, for the High Line Network project, TIAGO focused on the issue of gentrification. "Our people are currently undergoing a mass displacement with the intention of genocide through a process called ethnic cleansing. I created the design, which is simple and minimalist, with the intention of manifesting the gentrification suffered by our Puerto Rican brothers and sisters in Chicago and the one that Puerto Rico is suffering on a large scale," said the artist.

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“REPATRIACION”: «Un proyecto de intercambio cultural entre Chicago y Puerto Rico» se presenta en el MAPR



Billy Ocasio - CEO National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture, Curator Bianca Ortiz, Chicago Artists (Bibiana Suárez, Cándida Álvarez, Edra Soto, Javier Bosques, José Lerma, Josué Pellot, Luis Rodríguez Rosario, Nora Maité Nieves, Omar Velázquez y Oscar Luis Martínez) and Marta Mabel Perez - CEO of el Museum de Arte de Puerto Rico

El Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico (MAPR) y el National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture (NMPRAC) presentan la exhibición Repatriación: Un proyecto de intercambio cultural entre Chicago y Puerto Rico desde el 25 de enero de 2019, en la Galería Bertita y Guillermo L. Martínez del MAPR. «Esta exhibición es muestra de las múltiples oportunidades de colaboración que existen entre puertorriqueños y puertorriqueñas, de aquí y de allá. Repatriación presenta una selección condensada de artistas de Puerto Rico basados en Chicago, que residen en la ciudad o se mudaron recientemente de ella. Es también producto del esfuerzo y la dedicación del amigo Billy Ocasio, director del NMPRAC, una institución que se distingue por resaltar lo mejor de

nuestra cultura y nuestros valores. Sentimos gran entusiasmo por poder presentarles el fruto de esta valiosa alianza en beneficio de las artes y artistas puertorriqueñas y puertorriqueños», afirmó Marta Mabel Pérez, directora ejecutiva del MAPR.

Por su parte, Billy Ocasio, director del NMPRAC, añadió, «Repatriación abre un mundo de diálogo entre las comunidades de los Estados Unidos y las de Puerto Rico. Nos ayuda a cumplir nuestra responsabilidad nacional como una organización principal que influye y conecta las artes, la cultura y la historia de la diáspora con las generaciones en desarrollo. Estamos enviando el mensaje de que tenemos que apoyarnos mutuamente, especialmente después de la devastación causada por el huracán



Dr. Lourdes Ramos - CEO of the Museum of Latin American Art in California, Luis Miranda - CEO The MirRam Group, NMPRAC National Advisory Council; Marta Mabel Perez - CEO of el Museum de Arte de Puerto Rico, Laura Lott - CEO of the American Alliance of Museums, Billy Ocasio - CEO National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture

María. Nos sentimos honrados y orgullosos de asociarnos con la gran institución que es el MAPR y su Directora Ejecutiva, Marta Mabel Pérez».

Repatriación nace con un grupo de artistas que en su mayoría pertenecen a la primera generación de la segunda gran migración de puertorriqueños a los Estados Unidos, en este caso particular, Chicago. Bibiana Suárez, Cándida Álvarez, Edra Soto, Javier Bosques, José Lerma, Josué Pellot, Luis Rodríguez Rosario, Nora Maité Nieves, Omar Velázquez y Oscar Luis Martínez componen el grupo de artistas que forma parte de esta exhibición. El objetivo de la misma es resaltar la práctica contemporánea puertorriqueña de Chicago en Puerto Rico para abrir nuevos diálogos artísticos entre ambas comunidades. «La repatriación no puede concebirse sin una diáspora. En la actualidad, la palabra “diáspora” ha adquirido un significado general en referencia a la relocalización forzada de personas fuera de su país

de origen y hacia países extranjeros. Un aspecto crucial de la diáspora es el anhelo de regresar y de recrear la patria perdida. Es este anhelo el que se encuentra en el centro del concepto de “diáspora”. La diáspora está profundamente arraigada en la patria, incluso si se mantiene lejos de ella. La repatriación, por consiguiente, es el regreso de alguien a su propio país. También es el retorno del arte o patrimonio cultural a su país de origen», dijo la curadora de la exhibición, Bianca Ortiz Declat.

Para el mayor disfrute de la exhibición, el MAPR ha desarrollado una serie de actividades interpretativas dirigidas a diversos públicos. El miércoles 13 de febrero, habrá un recorrido guiado por el curador del MAPR y el miércoles, 20 de febrero, se llevará a cabo la segunda edición de Recorrido en versos, un recorrido-lectura inspirada en la exhibición a cargo de poetas. Ambas actividades se realizarán a las 6:00 p.m. y son libres de costo.

Repatriación: Un proyecto de intercambio cultural entre Chicago y Puerto Rico ha sido organizada por The National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture con el apoyo de MacArthur Foundation. La presentación de esta exhibición en el MAPR cuenta además con el respaldo de la Comisión Especial Conjunta sobre Donativos Legislativos para Impacto Comunitario. www.mapr.org

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CMS Community Peace Sign Project



This February, the Chicago Mosaic School will proudly bring a meaningful collaborative project to completion when principal CMS faculty members Sue Giannotti, Sue Coombs, Casey Van Loon, Martha Crandall, and founding executive director Karen Ami will travel to Humacao, Puerto Rico for the installation of 100+ mosaic peace signs designed and assembled by communities in Chicago and Humacao.

The seeds of the project were sown in the fall of 2017, when CMS certification student and Humacao resident Brenda Montanile was in Chicago following a CMS workshop. At home in Puerto Rico, Hurricane Maria had just made landfall on her historic hometown, leaving devastation in its wake. Upon finally returning home, Brenda and her community began the slow process of rebuilding from the ruins, partnering with Elegel Group, a local collective dedicated to graphic and urban arts, to create "Project Grita". Through the project, local artists and the Humacao community collaborated on over twenty-five large scale murals in tandem with urban renewal and post-disaster rebuilding initiatives. Concerned for the residents of Puerto Rico, we asked, "how can we help?", but until the stunning results of the mural project started to emerge, the answer was unclear.

Inspired by this initiative, Brenda proposed

that CMS partner with Coqui Charities to expand the project to public mosaics. Thanks to these organizing efforts and the support of the project's local financial sponsors, the Chicago Mosaic School has been able to contribute our materials, studio time, and expertise to the creation of 100 mosaic peace signs. Each mosaic is entirely unique, demonstrating its maker's individual vision of hope and healing for the city of Humacao. Every single sign features salvaged terra cotta tiles stripped from local Humacao buildings in the storm and repurposed as tesserae. These materials were collected by the city of Humacao and shipped to us with the generous sponsorship of Coqui Charities and private donors including Brenda Montanile.

Along with the participation of the CMS community and our new sister organization, the Bethany Art Center of Ossining, NY, we have been thrilled to enjoy a rich collaboration with the Puerto Rican Cultural Center of Chicago, who co-hosted two studio events with CMS in December so that members of the Puerto Rican community in Chicago can contribute their heartfelt expressions of solidarity with their family, friends, and fellow citizens in Puerto Rico through the creation of one-of-kind art. Mosaicists and Humacao Grita organizers are also helping the local Humacao community to create their own signs to beautify

their city and express their vision of renewal.

Upon completion, these diverse communities' art will not be displayed separately from each other, but will be incorporated together in an integrated installation. As Humacao recovers from the aftermath of such a harrowing ordeal, we hope these peace signs not only enrich the visual landscape of the city, but bear witness to an ethic of compassion, solidarity, and support for the victims of environmental disasters, and the healing potential of art. Installation will take place February 8-12 throughout the city of Humacao, Puerto Rico.

By Grace Walsh

Published on The Chicago Mosaic School
January 31, 2019



NANCY FRANCO MALDONADO PASEO BORICUA ARTS BUILDING

The Nancy Franco Maldonado Paseo Boricua Arts Building will open in 2020. This apartment complex will add new cultural economic and social dimensions to the dynamics of our community. It will serve as a hub for community artists and their families to live, create, produce, and sell their work. At the same time, it will serve as an incubator for the artists to engage other artists in a continuous dialogue about art and aesthetics. Two additional commercial enterprises will also be housed including a community theater and a community gallery for artists.

This TIFF investment of over 4 million dollars, which the City of Chicago is making, is one of the most significant in this community in many years; it is an investment in an area which has historically phased disinvestment and neglect.



The following article was originally published online by the American Planning Association (APA) on January 29, 2019

FOR PLANS FOR SHAPING THE FUTURE OF PUERTO RICO

In September 2017, Hurricanes Irma and Maria devastated the island of Puerto Rico. Recovery includes looking ahead to design a comprehensive set of plans for short- and long-term recovery.

Work on the plans is being done by Puerto Rico's Central Office of Recovery and Reconstruction (OCRR) in coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the National Security Operational Analysis Center

Hurricane Maria, one of the deadliest disasters in U.S. history, struck the island. The official death toll is estimated to be 2,975 individuals in Puerto Rico alone (Fink 2018). It was the 10th most intense Atlantic hurricane on record (Willie 2018). Hurricane Maria was also the third-costliest storm in U.S. history — \$90 billion — after Hurricanes Katrina (\$160 billion) and Harvey (\$125 billion).

The most severe loss of life and infrastructure

system, resulting in a 100 percent loss of power (Becker 2017). The power grid will need an investment of \$30 billion for power to be restored (Beeler 2018). Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA) was responsible for 10 percent of Puerto Rico's \$74 billion debt, not counting other debts like pension payments — making the island poorer while unable to improve service (Pierog 2018).

The disaster revealed precarious preexisting



(HSOAC), and various federal and state agencies.

Ivis García outlines these initiatives for economic, infrastructure, and social recovery.

Hurricane Irma, a Category 5 hurricane with 185 mph winds, tore doors and windows from houses, flew cars onto front lawns, and knocked down centennial trees when it arrived at the island of Puerto Rico. About 14 inches of rain fell on the northeastern part of the island on September 6, 2017, and Irma left 1 million people without power and more than 56,000 without potable water.

Only 40 percent of gas stations and 114 ATMs were open across the island (Government of Puerto Rico 2018). Roads were blocked and covered with debris. Telecommunications systems were destroyed, leaving people without contact for days. About 4,000 individuals were staying at shelters, and four people lost their lives (FEMA 2017).

Two weeks later, on September 20, 2017,

damage was in Puerto Rico, where the two storms caused damage of about \$100 billion (The Associated Press 2018). A record was achieved in Puerto Rico: the second-largest blackout in the world after the one caused when Super Typhoon Yolanda hit the Philippines in 2013 (Doug 2018).

According to a FEMA report it was also: (1) the lengthiest air mission delivering food and potable water in U.S. history, (2) the largest delivery of commodities due to a natural disaster, (3) the largest sea-bridge operation of federal disaster aid, (4) the largest disaster-generator installation mission in the United States, (5) one of the largest disaster medical response missions and, (6) one of the largest disaster housing missions in the history of the organization (FEMA 2018).

WHAT THE DISASTER REVEALED

The storm revealed the long-term lack of investment on the island. Maria's wind speeds knocked down 80 percent of the electric wire

conditions faced by many Puerto Ricans. For example, in 2017, the poverty rate in Puerto Rico was 45 percent compared with 13 percent in the United States (American Community Survey 2017). In general, working-age adults and children have been out-migrating at a fast pace for the last decade in search of work and a better quality of life.

Below is a summary of four plans that will shape Puerto Rico's response to the urgent humanitarian needs of the island's residents:

- Economic Development and Recovery Plan for Puerto Rico
- Fiscal Plan for Puerto Rico
- Disaster Recovery Action Plan
- Hazard Mitigation Plan

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RECOVERY PLAN FOR PUERTO RICO

On August 8, 2018, the Central Office of Recovery and Reconstruction delivered the Economic

(Continuation on Pg. 21)

Development and Recovery Plan for Puerto Rico to the U.S. Congress for approval. The plan estimates a total of \$139 billion in projects for reconstruction.

This plan was delivered in compliance with the requirements of the Federal Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-123), which requires Gov. Ricardo Rosselló and the Central Office of Recovery and Reconstruction of Puerto Rico (OCRR) (previously the Central Office of Recovery, Reconstruction, and Resiliency (COR3) to create a plan before funds can be approved. The plan was supported by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center (HSOAC).

Titled “Transformation and Innovation in the Wake of Devastation: An Economic and Disaster Recovery Plan for Puerto Rico,” the plan is divided into 17 initiatives, part of making Puerto Rico more resilient to future disasters as well as creating long-term economic recovery (RAND Corporation 2018). The \$139 billion in funds would come from the federal government, foundations, not-for-profits, and the Government of Puerto Rico.

The plan identifies projects that impact housing (rehabilitation, reconstruction, and new construction) (\$33 billion), improvements to solid waste facilities (\$30 billion), and the restoration of energy systems throughout the island (\$26 billion):

Communication	\$3.2 million
Environment	\$3.9 million
Public Buildings	\$5.8 million
Health	\$6.3 million
Economy	\$6.3 million
Transportation	\$8.4 million
Municipalities	\$190 million
Planning	\$590 million
Education	\$15 billion
Energy Systems	\$26 billion
Water Systems	\$30 billion
Housing	\$33 billion

For six months, the OCRR, in coordination with the FEMA, the National Security Operational Analysis Center (HSOAC), various federal agencies and state agencies, and other participating entities, held planning meetings with representatives of the different sectors, municipalities, and state and federal agencies to work on the plan. Once a draft was prepared, public hearings were held in Fajardo, Cataño, Ponce, and Mayagüez to receive citizen input. The RAND Corporation, the company that created the plan, conducted focus groups with residents and interviewed stakeholders.

The plan was published online in English and Spanish for public comments. Once the comment period was completed, public recommendations were evaluated and incorporated.

Short-term goals of the plan include:

1. Restoring essential infrastructure systems, including electrical system, water, communication, and transportation
2. Improving emergency preparedness through improvement of infrastructure and capacity of government employees to protect citizens in future disasters
3. Optimizing tenure and responsibility of public facilities and buildings by promoting their repair and reducing future risk

Long-term goals include:

1. Stopping emigration and fostering economic development
2. Revitalizing urban centers
3. Optimizing the scale of public services
4. Rebuilding the infrastructure
5. Improving data collection and management for accurate and comprehensive information

FISCAL PLAN FOR PUERTO RICO

On October 23, 2018, the Fiscal Plan for Puerto Rico was approved by the Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico — an unelected seven-member body that ensures Puerto Rico’s \$74 billion debt is paid.

The revised Fiscal Plan that Gov. Ricardo Rosselló presented to the Financial Oversight and Management Board will finance the creation of a new government structure that would divide the island into four counties. According to the revised Fiscal Plan, the government would regionalize essential services that are now in the hands of the central

government and municipalities including security, education, housing, and family services.

From 2018 to at the end of the fiscal year 2022, the funding reduction to the 78 municipalities would be around \$395 million (The Puerto Rico Fiscal Agency and Financial Advisory Authority 2018). According to the Fiscal Plan, this is a blunt blow because it represents the elimination of 100 percent of what they receive from the central government.

It is estimated that by 2022, 71 of the 78 municipalities will be bankrupt because most municipalities depend on that funding. For example, 90 percent of the budget of the municipality of Maricao is funded by the central government (Mercado 2017).

Meanwhile, the Fiscal Plan estimates that the economy would grow by \$82 billion over 10 years because of the reconstruction funds. The projection is for an average annual growth of 3.9 percent, which is 20.8 percent for the entire period. An expectation of economic growth influences the estimate of how much interest and principal toward the public debt the government could pay.

When a more optimistic growth estimate is presented, a higher repayment capacity of debt service is also being presented.

DISASTER RECOVERY ACTION PLAN

On February 1, 2018, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through HUD’s Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program awarded \$1.5 billion to support the long-term recovery of Puerto Rico — in particular housing, economic development, and infrastructure outlined in the Puerto Rico Disaster Recovery Action Plan.

This was the first of one of three CDBG-DR disbursement funds that will come to the island. The other ones are estimated to be closer to \$8 billion each, for a total of \$18.5 billion. After many months of anticipation, on September 20, 2018, the Government of Puerto Rico released its Second Draft Disaster Recovery Action Plan (DRAP) so it could receive the first disbursement of CDBG-DR funds assigned to the island mainly for the reconstruction of devastated housing and the economic development sector.

Funds will be available for family buildings or condominiums through the multifamily housing reconstruction, repair, and resiliency

(Continuation on Pg. 22)

program, so that the infrastructure arrangements of those buildings do not have to be charged, for example, to a maintenance fee or through money that comes from the owner's pocket.

Likewise, funds will be available to rehabilitate the area surrounding the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus, as well as in the Mayagüez university area. Some of the programs included in the Action Plan are:

- Comprehensive Planning of Community Resilience
- Repair, Reconstruction, or Relocation Program
- Property Title Program
- Mortgage Program
- Reconstruction, Repair, and Resilience of Multifamily Housing
- Assistance for Home Buyers
- Incubators and Accelerators of Small Businesses
- Tourism and Business Marketing Program and
- Urban and Rural Agriculture (Puerto Rico Department of Housing 2018)

DRAP funds are divided into \$1 billion for housing, \$145 million for economic revitalization, and \$100 million for infrastructure. The second package not only expands the capacity of action in these lines but also adds more programs, for example, to promote agriculture in urban centers and the economic development of that sector. The plan also allocates funds about \$50 million for community planning, including funds for citizen participation. The Foundation for Puerto Rico would obtain the Community Planning disbursement, which would be sub-awarded to municipalities.

The Department of Housing in Puerto Rico is in charge of the process, including the citizen participation that included 15 days of public involvement for the first amendments with no public hearings, and 30 days with public hearings for the second or substantial changes. This was a response to the concerns of the civil sector.

Many organizations and community groups argued there was a lack of time and forums for community participation on that first round of public comments. As a result of these changes, the second participatory process was much more expansive.

After responding to public comments and incorporating some additional elements into the plan, the Department of Housing in Puerto Rico submitted the Draft Substantial Amendment to the Action Plan to HUD for final evaluation and approval on November 18, 2018. As of that date, HUD had 45 days to report whether or not to approve the draft; the

U.S. government shutdown has delayed a response.

HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

Each one of the 78 municipalities needs to either create or update a Hazard Mitigation Plan according to the 2000 Federal Disaster Mitigation Act. The law was passed to encourage the reduction of loss of life and property after a disaster.

The ruling stated that to receive economic assistance from FEMA, municipalities need to prepare a multi-hazard mitigation plan, and these plans need to be revised every five years. Updating these plans is an essential way of continuing to incorporate mitigation practices in the daily operations of municipalities and in the planning of long-term activities that will contribute to reducing the vulnerability of the island to natural hazards.

The purpose of the plan is to identify activities and measures aimed at mitigating hazards such as hurricanes, floods, droughts, earthquakes, landslides, and other atmospheric, hydrological, and geological hazards. The plans will be revised to continue with the reduction of loss of life and property associated with different natural hazards and identify measures to meet the needs of each municipality and its residents in a planned manner. The plans will be ordered to promote sustained development by preserving the physical function and the benefits of conserving natural resources and infrastructure.

The Puerto Rico Planning Board has been given the responsibility as the administrator of this process. On September 2018 the board requested proposals to create or update these Local Hazard Mitigation Plans — some municipalities had planned while others have never created one (Puerto Rico Planning Board 2018).

Although an international company was chosen to conduct all of the mitigation plans, this information has not been made public yet.

In the end, these plans will allow the federal agencies to allocate funding to the different municipalities and address needs in an evidence-based manner. For planners, it will enable the full use of land use planning methods and benefits.

This is an excellent opportunity for capacity building of local planners in Puerto Rico.

Public participation and involvement with the municipalities are critical, and funds from CDBG-DR for community planning could be dedicated for public participation. Of course, municipalities

will have to apply for these funds, which will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. There are concerns that the company hired to update the Hazard Mitigation Plans might not engage the public in a meaningful way.

Moreover, municipalities with more capacity to apply for community planning funds would most likely take advantage of them, while municipalities with fewer resources might not.

As of right now, the plans are not expected to be organized multi-jurisdictionally. Also, older plans (when available) have not taken into consideration climate change, which is an element that research has shown to produce more effective plans.

CONCLUSION

These four plans prioritize housing, economic development, and infrastructure. However, given that Puerto Rico has suffered massive population loss and about 25 percent of properties are vacant according to the most recent American Community Survey, it is unclear why housing in the Action Plan — which determines how CDBG-DR funds will be spent — is being prioritized instead of economic development and infrastructure.

There is a real opportunity for these goals to employ planning lenses with input from practitioners. However, as of right now, they employ little input from local planners, which is a major concern.

Moreover, while the Fiscal Plan calls for regionalization, the other plans are scaled to the municipal level. There is a need to think both locally and regionally.

Finally, although some efforts have been made to increase community participation, planners and grassroots organizations feel that this aspect could be improved.

Article image: NASA astronaut Joe Acaba photographed Puerto Rico from the cupola of the International Space Station on October 12, 2017. Photo courtesy NASA.

By Ivis Garcia, AICP

Assistant Professor City and Metropolitan Planning Department at the University of Utah

HEALING POETRY
WORKSHOP

Poem By Dorian Ortega

RECOVERY

Uplifting from the ash

Knowing I really need some cash

Why does that never interest me?

Dull material things that only serve me instantly

Coming up and seeing myself

My flesh, my body, my thoughts myself

Being who I want to see so stupid shit can stop
re-occurringCreating little protective worlds doesn't mean
there won't be disrupted

I anticipate attack and resistance

Intrusion into my existence

I know I don't have 9 lives but I know there are
ways to survive

To thrive and carry forward even if my body dies

I can stand the blows, the rain, and even those
who put on a show

I can take it until I allow you to break it

Let you test me and push me to my limit so I can
see how far I can go

What debilitates me so that the pace goes slow

So what will I use to recover to re-up me?

What ointments, weapons of protection is going
to help to keep me going?

So I look at you and look at me

ATTENDANCE RATES INCREASE
PACHS Students Complete 10 Week
Healthy Relationship and Art Therapy Group

Beginning this school year, Pedro Albizu Campos High School and the Mental Wellness unit of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center partnered with a Care Team of community mental health support partners. This partnership developed a support system for youth who were under the sway of severe trauma. This trauma had lowered their academic performance and hurt their attendance.

Therefore, the Mental Wellness program developed and implemented a Healthy Relationship group for couples in unhealthy relationships as well as an Expressive Art therapy group. Group sessions were held on Mondays and Fridays during the course of 10 weeks and included students who were selected based on referrals from school administrators and mentors.

Students were monitored for attendance, participation, behavior, attitude, and academic improvements. The completion of engagement in support groups displayed improvements in nearly all areas monitored. Students who participated in the groups reported learning healthy ways to engage in communication, emotional regulation, and other healthy coping skills. On the last day, the students were celebrated with a Graduation Luncheon to mark the completion of their sessions and their considerable achievements.

Sara Gonzalez, LPC, led the Healthy Relationship group, focusing on how to improve communication and gain skills to enhance engagement with partners, peers and family

members. Throughout the group sessions, it was evident that male students improved their attendance as well as learned how to build healthier and stabler relationships.

Stacy R. Epps-DeStefano, CADC, led the Expressive Art therapy group, which focused on the use of colors, free expression, and the evaluation of artwork to engage with emotional expression and meaning. Students were eager to participate due to the recent elimination of the art program elective. One student reported he wanted the group to run every day and he vigorously recruited other students to join!

The Mental Wellness program is an extension of Vida/SIDA at the Puerto Rican Cultural Center and provides free psychosocial and substance use counseling services to individuals living with HIV.

Additionally, participants who are at high risk for contracting HIV receive a free consultation and behavioral health referrals. Given the considerable expertise of the counselors, the Mental Wellness program has been able to provide other wide-ranging services because of integrated partnerships within the agency as well as the surrounding community. Recently, the Mental Wellness program was contracted to begin an Expressive Art therapy program called, "Art Feels" at Yates Elementary School starting in February 2019.

By Dorian Ortega, Mental Health VIDA/SIDA



PACHS HOSTS HEALTH FAIR WITH TRANS CHICAGO

On Wednesday, December 5, 2018 the Pedro Albizu Campos High School (PACHS) hosted a Health Fair. Parents, teachers and students participated in the event, which was organized by Nathalie Tirado, Coordinator of the TRANS Chicago Program. This initiative is part of an effort to prevent the transmission of HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

The Health Fair was a collaboration between two of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center's (PRCC) health initiative programs, (TRANS Chicago and Vida/SIDA), and other community partners. The programs worked collectively to enhance the participants' experience. This included testing, counseling, and nutrition. PRCC staff divided themselves into groups to give orientation, prevention best practices, and testing to the students in different confidential spaces of the school. Teachers and employees worked together as a team.

Tirado said, "It was a powerful moment that likely will result in fewer infections through education of the high school students. As a prevention program,

we encourage everyone to be tested. Know your status! I am grateful for the hard work of our staff and especially to PACHS Principal Melissa Lewis and Dean of Students Jessie Fuentes. Without their strong collaboration, this could not have happened."

By Javier Valentín,
La Voz del Paseo Boricua.



Kevin Hernandez, Program Coordinator of PrEPárate and students

REFLECTIONS ON A VISIT TO PASEO BORICUA



It was a chilly and snowy day when we toured the community of our program partner at Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School (PACHS) in Humboldt Park. We met with the school's Executive Director, Marvin Garcia; the Principal, Melissa Lewis; and José López, Executive Director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center who told us about the multifaceted and rich efforts to serve the community.

We then walked the Paseo Boricua -- taking in the colorful and powerful murals that adorned Division Street. Along the way we stopped in on a planning meeting for yet another project in the community that included politicians, a community business-person, Jessie Fuentes, who is the Dean of Student Affairs at PACHS, and others.

Literature for All of Us participant, Maria Carmen joined us for lunch and talked about her experience with the program and at the school. We were generously provided a delicious Puerto Rican lunch of chicken stew, rice with pigeon peas, sweet plantains, and salad at Nellie's Restaurant. (As if that weren't enough ... and

it certainly was, Karona, my husband; Clyde, and I stopped at Café Colao on the way home.)

We all appreciated the warmth of those we met and the opportunity to experience the community up close. We look forward to more collaborations.

By Julie Victor, Board Member
Literature for all of Us



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El volumen 2 trabaja temas más avanzados de teoría y solfeo siempre utilizando un lenguaje sencillo y fácil de entender. El alumno disfrutará de láminas a color, juegos, compositor del día y otros mientras aprende importantes y necesarios conceptos de la música.



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Las lecciones están divididas en secciones que presentan los conceptos básicos del solfeo y la teoría musical.



Actividades variadas

El libro utiliza para la enseñanza secciones de colorear, pareos, llena blancos, crucigrama, trazos y busca palabras entre otros.

Mi primer libro de teoría y solfeo es un libro-cuaderno de música con el que los niños aprenderán los fundamentos de la música mientras disfrutan.

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martes, **5 marzo**

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jueves, **7 marzo**

6:00 – 8:00 PM

el horario de las clases:

lunes - viernes: 9:00AM – 1:00PM

martes, jueves: 6:00 – 9:00 PM

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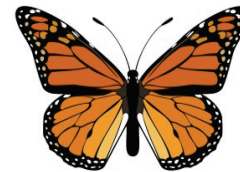
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