

DISASTER RECOVERY CORNER

OPERATION SAN JUAN

Shown here in this image is a line of community members waiting to be seen by Vincentians and clergy members managing the P-RAC Operations in San Juan, Puerto Rico



THROUGH ELIZABETH'S LENS

Image Shown: A group of state-side Vincentians deployed to San Juan, Puerto Rico to respond and assist the local Council of San Juan, offering the community support services and aide through the P-RAC Program. Elizabeth Disco-Shearer, CEO of the Disaster Services Corporation, SVDP-USA, shares her story.

The Disaster Services Corporation deployed a team of 14 volunteers to Puerto Rico on December 2-9, 2017. We housed all of the team at a local Redemptorist Retreat Center in downtown San Juan. The Center had no hot water and no access to wifi or TV, but it was one of the most rewarding deployments that I have done in the last 13 years. We started the day with a daily Mass celebrated by Father Ramon Decaen, of Lincoln, NE. Father Ramon was a member of our PR Deployment Team. I then coordinated the breakfasts for our team members and we sent them out in two separate vans to serve work at the Parish Recovery Assistance Centers in Canovanas and Manati, PR.

Driving in Puerto Rico was not easy as most traffic signals were out and there were limited street signs.

I worked at the Canovanas P-RAC for two days and I witnessed the most amazing dedication of our Vincentians serving families devastated by Hurricanes Maria, Irma and poverty. The survivors that we served had lost everything and were waiting in line for 7-8 hours just to get six bottles of bottled war. The survivors were grateful for the gift cards, water and food that we provided and for the Case Management work we provided. We registered hurricane impacted households with FEMA and provide information and referral to other services. - Continued Next Page...



VINCENTIANS RESPOND



Elizabeth Disco-Shearer, CEO of the Disaster Services Corporation, SVDP-USA shares her story of the deployment experience with the Vincentians in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Image shown: William Rodriguez, Council President, purchasing food that will be issued at the P-RAC .

Several of the local survivors started helping us at the P-RACs. Their spirit of giving was amazing, as they had lost so much. We prayed daily with the crowds that were waiting for help. There were street children, that had no parents, stray dogs, very sick elderly and handicapped patients that came looking for assistance and our deployed Vincentians daily witnessed by their presence.

Our volunteer team consisted of local Puerto Rican Vincentians, local Daughters of Charities and of deployed Vincentians who had professions such as a MD, Priest, Engineer, Medical Interpreter, retired Army Officer, Social Workers and Banker. It was an awesome group of Vincentians. I wish I could have adopted several of the homeless children, but we did try and provide them with some assistance. At the end of the week, we were treated by our local Vincentians to a Puerto Rican Christmas Dinner and it was amazing. So despite the heat, no power and wifi in many locations and the very deplorable living conditions of the disaster survivors, I must say that I felt a true calling to continue to assist the people of Puerto Rico with their recovery. I cried some silent tears at night as I reflected on how very privileged I was to live stateside.

VINCENTIANS RESPOND

Dave Bruckner , Vincentian and Knight of Columbus, of Tyler, Texas shares his thoughts on his time in Puerto Rico.

"The Puerto Rico service opportunity was a true win-win experience for the volunteers and the clients in the spirit of the Essential Elements of the Society: spirituality, friendship, and service. We, the SVdP-DSC volunteers, were provided the chance to grow in spirituality through daily Mass and through service to those in need. Next, the friendships that develop outside of our own Conference through working towards a common goal will carry over to future volunteer opportunities. Finally, the Parish Recovery Assistance Center concept allows us to assist with the client's immediate and longer term physical needs, and provides for that personal contact necessary to hear each person's story." - Dave Bruckner

This image is of a young girl that was keeping watch over the generator stationed outside the Parish.



**Vincentians in the Manati, Puerto Rico
P-RAC leading intake and providing
support services to the local
community.**



“What stood out was the graciousness and patience of the clients. Lots of smiles and “thank-you’s” despite the situation in which many find themselves and the sometimes longer lines. The local volunteers were truly inspiring. We had so many local volunteers working long hours each day. They took initiative to fill needs of organization, process, and supply as we strived for continuous improvement each day of service to our clients.” - Dave Bruckner of Tyler, Texas

V I N C E N T I A N S
R E S P O N D

The Disaster Services Corporation, SVDP-USA Parish Resource Center Operations were co-managed by Vincentians deployed from state-side, the local SVDP Council of San Juan, and the local Clergy. Shown below is CEO, Elizabeth Disco-Shearer with two local Daughters of Charity. The P-RAC was open from December 4 - 8th.



FUTURE DEPLOYMENTS

The image shown below is of the line of community members waiting to be seen by Vincentians and the clergy at the second P-RAC operation in Manati, Puerto Rico.

Two additional P-RACs are being planned to open in January outside of San Juan, Puerto Rico. We will have a volunteer interest form specifically for this deployment available on our website within the next couple of weeks. If you or anyone you know is interested, please contact the Disaster Services Corporation, SVDP-USA.

A deployment to the US Virgin Islands is being considered for February. Anyone that may be interested, please contact us for this opportunity as well.

Both the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico are still declared under a State of Emergency.

Please stop by our newly updated website at: www.svdpcdisaster.org

You can donate directly to the disaster fund at www.svdpcdisaster.org

You can contact us at: info@svdpcdisaster.org

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