



Duquesne Responds in a CRISIS

By Rose Ravasio, A'90, and Megan Tressler

When natural disasters struck last fall, the Duquesne University community came together to help those affected by Hurricane Harvey, Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria.

Through various fundraising efforts and the generosity of students, faculty, staff and alumni, the campus community raised approximately \$35,000 to assist with hurricane recovery efforts.

"As we saw images of so much devastation, we felt a deep sense of concern for the well-being of those in the path of these monster storms," says Duquesne President Ken Gormley. "I'm proud of the response of the Duquesne community, which came together to offer financial contributions, as well as donate desperately needed supplies to those suffering after the storms. We continue to

pray for all those who lost loved ones and those working to help rebuild the impacted areas."

Duquesne has important connections to areas hit by the hurricanes.

More than 250 alumni live in the Houston area (with many more along the coast) and current students hail from the region. St. Benedict the Abbot Catholic Church in Houston is led by Spiritan pastor Rev. Clement Uchendu, C.S.Sp.; and the leader of The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston is His Eminence Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, a Pittsburgh native and a graduate of Duquesne.

Recognizing the need for assistance, the leadership of the Duquesne Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association, along with Spiritan Campus Ministry, sponsored a crowdfunding initiative that garnered more than \$30,000 in donations. Funds were donated to Catholic Charities of The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston and a special project supported by the Spiritan community in Houston that provides shelter and food to homeless individuals.

Not long after Hurricane Harvey struck, the world watched as Puerto Rico—home to nearly

30 current Duquesne students and faculty members, and numerous alumni—was battered by Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria. The Office of the President, along with the offices of Residence Life, Diversity and Inclusion, Campus Ministry, Admissions, Financial Aid and Athletics, as well as the Center for Student Wellbeing and the Psychology Clinic, took steps to assist these members of the Duquesne family.

The Duquesne community supported *Todas Juntos: All Together for Puerto Rico*, a relief initiative established by Duquesne students from Puerto Rico, the Latin American Students Association and the women’s tennis team, that raised more than \$4,000 and collected donations of diapers, clothing, water and hygiene products. All monetary donations were given to UNICEF Relief in Puerto Rico and the donated items were sent to Hogar del Buen Pastor /The Good Shepherd Home, a non-profit organization in Puerto Rico.

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Additional efforts included:

- LASA, the Muslim Student Association, the DU College Democrats, Modern Language Scholars, Phi Kappa Theta and the tennis team held a collaborative project to support UNICEF efforts in Puerto Rico.
- The Students for Human Rights organization hosted a fundraiser to support a Puerto Rican charity.
- The Phi Kappa Theta fraternity sold T-shirts to benefit hurricane relief efforts.
- The men’s basketball team hosted an exhibition game in which net proceeds benefited the United Way’s hurricane relief efforts in Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Two Duquesne graduates were among those helping people affected by the hurricanes.



Duquesne students from Puerto Rico gathered to enjoy a Caribbean meal organized by Duquesne University School of Education Professor Yadira Sánchez and others.

Dan Fitzhenry, L’96, responded to Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma as a member of the federal Incident Response and Coordination Team, which helps coordinate medical assistance provided by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

At the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, the staging area for all incoming federal medical team personnel, Fitzhenry helped process approximately 2,500 medical responders, arranging transportation and housing so they could complete their missions.

As Hurricane Irma set its sights on Florida, Fitzhenry’s team was sent to Orlando, Fla. to support the federal medical staging operation set up in the Coronado Springs Resort in Disney World.

Fitzhenry has been involved with federal disaster response since 1989.

“I have been on numerous other deployments and did field medical work in the heart of the disaster zones—I can tell you about victims of those disasters. But with this Harvey/Irma response, I primarily worked with the responders and they, too, had stories to be told,” says Fitzhenry. “While they were awaiting a mission, I could hear the team members talking on their phones to loved ones back home, affirming, often emotionally, that he/she indeed missed and loved those they would be away from. And, also, voices were heard where team members were fervently and firmly assuring their loved ones that they were indeed okay and safe, and did not believe they would be in danger when they went to a mission location in a hurricane-damaged area.”

Francis Feld (DNP, CRNA, LAT, NRP), N’93, was recently deployed by the Department of Health & Human Services

to Texas for Hurricane Harvey and Puerto Rico for Hurricane Maria as a part of the National Disaster Medical System.

In Texas, he helped set up a clinic in a high school gymnasium where more than 600 patients were treated. In Puerto Rico, he worked in a tent facility located at the port where the hospital ship *USNS Comfort* was moored. There, he saw patients and treated them for acute and chronic conditions.

He has been deployed for four other hurricanes and responded to the 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

“Everybody is always gracious and thankful that we are there to help and they are patient and polite. In Puerto Rico, it never ceased to amaze me how the people waiting to be seen sat quietly and waited their turn. Several times I lost track of who was next and when I called the wrong person, they immediately pointed out another person who had been there first,” says Feld, who works at UPMC Passavant Hospital as a nurse anesthetist. “Disasters sometimes bring out the worst in people, but my experience is that it more often brings out the best in people.” ♦

Alumnus Francis Feld is shown during deployment for Hurricane Matthew in 2016. He has been deployed for six hurricanes, including Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Maria.

