



# BROTHER'S BROTHER FOUNDATION

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Ozzy Samad

As we face one of the most challenging times in modern day memory, we hope that you and your loved ones are safe under such trying circumstances. Foremost in our thoughts lie the well-being of family and friends, the wider BBF community, along with anxious and suffering people the world over. Our hearts go out especially to the elderly and those who have preexisting conditions or are in frail health; knowing that this makes an already difficult situation even more challenging.

BBF has responded to the COVID-19 crisis by providing Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) to our partners both here at home and in other areas of the world. We are working closely with local government agencies, major healthcare providers, and front-line responders locally here in Pittsburgh, nationally, and with our partners worldwide. PPE includes, but is not limited to, safety glasses, medical coveralls, disposable scrubs, face shields, surgical and respirator face masks, gloves, and infection control kits. To cope with today's difficult circumstances, ER and other physicians have come to BBF facilities to pick up PPE for their staff. Given the potential demands on our own health systems, we are preparing to provide hospital beds either locally or to other cities around our country in case they are needed. We will also provide any other type of equipment and supplies that BBF may have available that are needed. BBF is working to potentially acquire N95 masks and other PPE from international distributors. This is to augment our donated supplies that have been rapidly depleted given the demand from healthcare partners. We're also exploring additional funding opportunities to cover both acquisition and shipping costs.

The stories of hope and resilience in our newsletters including this one, take place only because supporters like you enable and empower them to happen. We want you to know about our work and collaborations and the invaluable impact that you are making. As conditions improve, I look forward to telling you more about projects such as BBF providing tents that serve as classrooms to school children in Guanica, Puerto Rico who were affected by the earthquakes, and a financially sustainable eye clinic that we are exploring with our partner organizations and dedicated medical professionals. In this model, those who can pay will subsidize others who are unable to do so. It is one that can be replicated in other areas that lack such critical facilities.

In our next newsletter we hope to be able to say that the worst of crisis, at least the healthcare portion of it, is behind us. There will undoubtedly be many challenges to come for some time ahead with economic, financial, and career uncertainties, but we are optimistic that with our spirit intact, we can forge ahead and overcome these obstacles. Whether it has been wars or economic crises that have consumed our great nation or the world at large, in time we have persevered and come out ahead. Together, we will do so again.

Please know that we are thinking of you and wishing you and your families only the best.

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## BBF RESPONDS

### CORONAVIRUS

by Sarah Boal

The disaster response team at Brother's Brother has been busy this winter with tornadoes in Tennessee, earthquakes in Puerto Rico and the global Coronavirus outbreak.

As COVID-19 started its global expansion BBF jumped into action. Along with a strong coalition of partners new and old, we have provided hospitals and healthcare providers on four continents with the protective gear that they need to treat patients with this new virus. Closer to home we've worked with agencies serving in the neighborhoods where our staff members live and work as well.

As the pandemic spreads and evolves BBF continues to source and provide the resources needed by our healthcare professionals and responders. Constant communication with

our partners from Pennsylvania and across the globe is key in the ever-evolving effort to address the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic.



## NASHVILLE TORNADOES

by Sarah Boal

In the overnight hours of March 3rd, tornadoes tore through Tennessee leaving more than two dozen dead, and thousands injured and in need of assistance due to the destruction. Downtown Nashville was hit which garnered huge media coverage, but miles to east near Cookeville there was much less attention, but even greater destruction. Brother's Brother Foundation in coordination with long-time partner Gleaning for the World sent a container of disaster relief items including cleaning supplies, recovery materials, hygiene kits, and nonperishable foods to the affected areas.

## CONTINUING EFFORTS IN PUERTO RICO

by Javier Janik

Thanks to the generous support in response to the recent earthquakes in Puerto Rico, Brother's Brother Foundation has been able to support several communities affected by the disaster. These efforts, all in coordination with our partners, included:



- Assisting Puerto Rico Rises with the distribution of food, water filters, cooking stoves, tents, and more throughout affected communities. Pictured to the left, (back row, on the far right) BBF staff member Javier Janik helped unload supplies being distributed to a community center in Lares. Javier was in Puerto Rico from January 19th to the 24th.

- Two 40-foot containers of supplies were sent out of BBF warehouses to partners Ponce Medical School Foundation, Puerto Rico Rises, and the municipality of Loíza. The shipments included cleaning and hygiene supplies, batteries, medical equipment, and other relief items.

Along with the partners referred to above, BBF would like to thank its friends at Luis Garratón LLC, another local partner in Puerto Rico, for taking on so much of the logistics, making this work possible.

# LAROCHE SPRING BREAK TRIP WITH PUERTO RICO RISES

by Sarah Boal

A team of nine students and two advisors from LaRoche University participated in a service-learning trip to Puerto Rico in the second week of March. During this time the team completed service projects with Brother's Brother partners Puerto Rico Rises and One Human Family Coalition over three days. They also spent a day with Endeavor in Arecibo. Visiting the northwest corner of the island, the team worked in the communities of Aguadilla, Isabela, and Quebradillas.

Working with Puerto Rico Rises on Monday, the students helped an elderly couple with limited mobility to remove debris still left in their yard from Hurricane Maria. They cleared the lot and arranged for the debris to be hauled away. They also did some minor yard work to make the space more welcoming and friendly.

On Thursday they traveled to the Puerto Rico Rises community center to assist in the conversion of the former school site to another community center and emergency shelter. They painted a pavilion, two offices, and even some creative desks and chairs for the classes that will be offered in the space.

Friday brought a visit to Quebradillas and One Human Family Coalition where the team met with Obama, their community liaison. Obama, who works for the municipality, and the team assisted with trash pickup and removal from a popular local park and overlook. Once the work was completed, they enjoyed a late lunch at a local food truck and a tour of the hurricane damage across the region which included the monumental project of the reconstruction of a dam by the Army Corps of Engineers to keep the valley from flooding again in the future.



## EDUCATION UPDATES

by Rebecca Jones

In February, Brother's Brother Foundation was able to support several Peace Corps Volunteers through various grants being completed in host countries. We were able to provide funding for computer labs in Guinea and Madagascar. In both countries, the computers will be used by students and teachers to administer technology courses, for mentorship programs, and for basic research. The computer lab in Madagascar will allow access to computers and resources for two universities and one high school across the island. With this funding, two volunteers will be able to equip those schools with 73 computers. We were also fortunate to be able to support a training camp for community members on sexual health in Madagascar. These camps can vary from exploring hygiene practices, decision making, healthy relationships, HIV and STI prevention, and pregnancy prevention.

BBF also provided support in building a student learning center for a community in Indonesia. Student learning centers allow students to have a safe space to go after school and provides access to education resources, technology, tutors, and afterschool programs.

Earlier this year, BBF worked with a family in Pittsburgh to donate supplies to a Special Education and Rehabilitation Center in a community in Turkey. In 2008, the school began providing alternative resources and education to young adults and children in the community. While serving students ages 0-18, the school provides about 100 students with access to physical therapy and education. In 2019, we were able to work with a school in Charlotte, NC to gather math resources and children's books in braille for the school. We were excited to continue our work with them to donate basic braille readers, swell paper that can be embossed at the school, tactile kits and manipulatives, and canes for the students.

BBF is also excited to be working with All Hands and Hearts as well as The Reuse Network to send two containers of desks, chairs, and other school furniture to schools recovering from Hurricane Dorian in Abaco.

## W.A.S.H. VOLUNTEERING

by Gina Pearlman



On February 28th Brother's Brother hosted a volunteer event. We had five women come in to sew the reusable menstrual pads that we are now making at our Behan Street location. This was the third time we had this particular group come in. With lots of trial and error we were finally able to decide on a pattern that suits our needs. Although not everyone was able to sew, there was plenty of work for everyone to do. The non-sewers kept busy tracing patterns, cutting fabric, and attaching snaps while those with sewing skills were busy assembling the pieces.

All in all, it was an incredibly productive day. With the addition of a serger, which is a special type of sewing machine that can trim the seam and enclose the seam allowance or edge of the fabric all in one step, we were able to make dozens of flannel inserts. In addition to the inserts we also completed quite a few of the liners.

Our ultimate goal is to get enough pads made so that we can send them to a rural clinic in Guatemala later this year. They will be part of a kit that, in addition to the pads, will contain soap, underwear, a towel or washcloth, and a bag in which to carry everything discreetly.

Even though we are in the beginning stages of the program, we are making good progress. Although we have volunteers helping out, we can always use more. Feel free to contact Gina Pearlman at [gpearlman@brothersbrother.org](mailto:gpearlman@brothersbrother.org) if you're interested.



# MED-SURG TRIP REPORTS

## ONE HUMAN FAMILY COALITION IN PUERTO RICO

by Corey Fritz



"It was a long week. Logging 2,300 miles in five days and seeing almost 100 patients, I am incredibly proud of my team's ability to provide the hand up that the people needed when they needed it most. It was meant to be that we showed up immediately following the earthquakes and once again, Brother's Brother gave us the support we needed. I have been working for the beautiful people of Puerto Rico for the past two years and our work would not be possible without Brother's Brother. We are incredibly grateful for our continued relationship." One Human Family Coalition is a Puerto Rico-based organization.



## G3 FOUNDATION IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



## BE LIKE BRIT IN HAITI

After missing a year of service due to civil unrest in the region, the Be Like Brit Foundation team returned to Grand Goâve. The team of medical professionals and translators provided medical care, training for local health professionals and patients regarding pregnancy and infant food transitions.

In addition, future educational efforts were prepared for by collecting demographic information. This included information about the patient's living situations, access to food and water, employment, and education levels. As always, the goal is to elevate.

BBF contributed to the six large hockey bags filled with medicines, medical supplies, and hygiene kits that the team used to provide care to 63 women and girls.



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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## OPERATIONAL CHANGES DUE TO COVID-19 RESPONSE MARCH 15, 2020

Due the current public health emergency caused by the spread of the novel coronavirus, to protect the health of members of the community, volunteers, partners, and staff, BBF has instituted the following policies with immediate effect. We sincerely regret any inconvenience this may cause but hope you understand the necessity of such actions:

BBF has suspended its volunteer activities at the Behan Street location. We hope to welcome back volunteers as conditions improve and warrant a safe resumption of such activities.

With the exception of approved and scheduled incoming deliveries and outgoing shipments, BBF's office and warehouses will be closed to all visitors until further notice.

BBF has suspended all pickups from business and institutional donors in both the Pittsburgh and Washington D.C. / Baltimore markets. We will also be unable to accept any donated equipment and supplies from individual donors at the Pittsburgh and New Windsor, MD facilities.

Thank you for your understanding of our need to take these actions to help stem the effects of this global pandemic. These actions are subject to change as the situation evolves and we hope to be able to resume normal operations as conditions improve.

BBF wishes you and your loved ones the best of health in such times of crisis.

Please see the following links for information on the COVID-19 Pandemic:

**World Health Organization (WHO)**  
<https://bit.ly/2QvHVuK>

**PA Department of Health website**  
<https://bit.ly/33wegXN>

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**  
<https://bit.ly/2xbrlEo>

**Allegheny County Department of Health website**  
<http://bit.ly/2TTcugc>

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE IN PUERTO RICO

by Sarah Boal

Juan is Senior at Guanica High School who I had the honor to meet on March 11th. He dreams of a career in computer technology and being able to take care of his family. Juan has already been accepted to his first choice of University and smiles sheepishly when his teachers talk about academic talent and leadership among his peers. Juan is an All American kid with hopes and dreams, but Juan and his classmates have one huge hurdle left in front of them. Graduation.



Long before the sun rose on January 7th, citizens of Guanica and surrounding communities were awakened by the largest earthquake to rock Puerto Rico in a century. A quake wasn't entirely unexpected, the cluster of earthquakes started on December 28th and continues today. The shock was the strength and damage. People in southern Puerto Rico are marking time in terms of before and after. Life changed in those few moments.



In Guanica, there is hope. In Guanica people are looking to the future, and they know that their students are that future. Guanica started this school year with 95 Seniors, now they, along with their fellow high school students, meet in an improvised tent school built on the athletic fields. They complete their assignments on folding tables and chairs. The "elementary school" sits about ten yards away with a similar set up. The "middle school" was under construction the day I visited. The unflappable spirit and determination of these students, their teachers, and administrators was contagious.

Brother's Brother joined a coalition of organizations from Coca-Cola to the Ricky Martin Foundation to get these students the facilities and supplies they needed to get back in school. In surrounding communities the students still hadn't started classes more than two months following the quake, but in Guanica students spoke of graduation and plans for the future. There was energy in the air the day I visited. Guanica has been one of the few communities on the island to have a music program and band. The band director and support staff at the school had managed to accomplish a rescue mission into the partially collapsed building to retrieve the majority of the instruments, if mouthpieces can be secured, these students will be able to play at their own graduation.

### GIVING IN HONOR/MEMORY

Did you know? You can send a donation to BBF in honor or memory of a friend or loved one and BBF staff will send a personalized note at your direction. In the first two months of 2020, BBF received 23 gifts in honor or memory totaling \$2,085. For additional information about BBF honor or memory cards, please call 412-321-3160.

### HONOR/RECOGNITION



### COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN

BBF's new Combined Federal Campaign number is **12228**

Brother's Brother Foundation is pleased to announce that financial support from federal employees continues. Many thanks to both our new and renewing CFC donors.

Look for BBF in the fall 2020 campaign brochure. For donors who are not government employees, please remember that some employers match individual donations. Ask about your employer's matching gifts program.

This is a great way to give to BBF.

Thank you!

