



## **MAKING IT HAPPEN**

### **Reflections on Teamwork With a Focus on Programs**

By Ozzy Samad

You may recall that in the last newsletter, we provided you with a vision of how BBF will grow to further serve those in need in the years to come. As we say goodbye to a challenging year the world over and start 2021 with cautious optimism for a return to normalcy, I could not be more excited to introduce to you members of our team who dedicatedly carry out BBF's mission every day.

To be responsible stewards of your gracious support, BBF maintains a streamlined staff and focuses on working with partners in the field. The success of our efforts is based on BBF's entire team working together as we collaboratively move forward. For instance, the development staff works tirelessly to keep you abreast of our work and your support enables us to have the wherewithal to implement BBF's programs. The same goes for those working to proverbially keep the trains running on time in logistical and administrative capacities, and for everyone else in-between.

Today, we bring to you profiles of the Director of BBF Programs, Liam Carstens and his right-hand person, Program Coordinator, Abigael Siecinski.

Having rejoined BBF last April to lead the Healthcare Program, Liam has well-earned becoming the head of all BBF Programs. Through a shared exemplary work ethic and can-do mindset, he has had a tremendous impact on the productivity of the program area; thereby enabling us to help more people in need in these challenging times.

Prior to his return, Liam led Partner Liberia and Surgicorps International - both long-term BBF partners.

He has a Master's in Social and Public Policy from Duquesne University, a Graduate Certificate in Politics and Economics from Univerzita Karlova V Paraz, and a Certificate in Global Development and Humanitarian Aid from LaRoche College. We are delighted at having Liam at the helm of BBF's programs.

Abigael graduated with a Bachelor's in Politics, Philosophy and Business in May of 2020 from the University of Pittsburgh. We were fortunate to draw her to BBF after her merit internship at BBF partner, 412 Food Rescue. 412's Chief Operating Officer, could not have given Abigael a more positive recommendation and this has certainly been borne out with her tenure here.

During her undergraduate program, Abigael interned at an immigration law firm, the Women's Law Project, and the Offices of a Pittsburgh City Councilman. She was also President of the Pitt Pathfinders student tour guides. Abigael intends to pursue her law degree and someday become a federal judge. We could not be more supportive of her goals!

In the coming days, we will continue to highlight more of BBF's team members with the hope this will give you further pride and confidence in the organization of which you are an integral part. I hope you've had the opportunity to review our 2019 Annual Report on the website to learn more about the impact you are helping make. We'll be sure to have the 2020 Report for you this Spring!

**Thank you for your commitment to BBF and best wishes for a very Happy New Year! ■**

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## Preparing for Vaccine Distributions in Puerto Rico

By Abigael Siecinski

Brother's Brother Foundation has a long and robust partnership with the Ponce Medical School Foundation in Puerto Rico. Over the years we have worked with them to rebuild infrastructure after disasters, equip new healthcare clinics, and assist in the creation of a mobile care unit that provides needed healthcare services to uninsured and underinsured patients, often in rural areas.

This past year has brought new needs and obstacles to healthcare providers all over the world, and the team at Ponce has taken on the immense task of planning and implementing COVID-19 vaccine distributions (which have begun as of the new year). The planning for this endeavor began months ago as an approved vaccine

seemed to be on the way. In regular discussions with Ponce's Senior Medical Officer, Laura Domenech, it became clear that BBF could help fulfill a need in this distribution planning. We were then able to support Ponce in the acquisition of medical grade coolers and thermometers, which are vital for the medical care unit to be able to deliver the vaccine to distribution sites while maintaining the necessary cold temperatures.

BBF is proud to be partners with an organization doing such great work, especially during this particularly hard year. We are excited to see the vaccine distribution progress across the island and we are looking forward to what opportunities 2021 will provide as we continue to expand this partnership. ■

## One Home One Toilet

By Abigael Siecinski

Himalayan HealthCare (HHC) is an organization whose mission is "to create sustainable development programs in remote areas of Nepal that will improve the quality of life for its people." BBF first partnered with HHC through our disaster response program in 2015 after the earthquakes in Nepal. Flash forward 5 years later, we were able to reconnect through an entirely different program department – infrastructure.

HHC is currently working on a "One Home One Toilet" campaign. This

project's goal is to install toilets into the homes of Ruby Valley community members. These communities have long suffered from the legacy of Nepal's caste system resulting in poverty and disease. Open defecation is a too-common practice in these communities which can spread disease and contaminate food and water sources. These health concerns have become even more pressing in the face of a global pandemic. HHC is working with the Nepal government to install 500 toilets to declare the region Open Defecation Free.

When this project was brought to our attention, we were excited to reconnect with an old partner and to extend our WASH program into a new region of the world. BBF has supported the installation of 15 toilets in the region including the locally sourced supplies and labor needed to build the structures. We believe in the work HHC is doing and the power of WASH programs to save lives by preventing diseases and contributing to a greater quality of life in these communities. ■



## Donating Just Got Easier!

Brother's Brother Foundation would like to introduce the newest and easiest way for you to support our work in just a few easy steps! Just open the camera app on your smart device, focus the camera on the QR code by gently tapping the code, and follow the directions that appear on your screen. This will take you directly to our donation page. Donating has never looked so good! ■

# BBF DISASTER RESPONSE: Hurricane Sally

By Liam Carstens



our partnership, those in need in Northwest Florida received the equivalent of 3,000 healthy meals in the days after the hurricane struck.

According to Kerri Smayda, of Manna Food Bank, "Following the hurricane disaster, Manna added more than a dozen community agencies as food distribution partners to ensure that people in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties with the greatest need for food assistance had their needs met.

We recently received information about our response to Hurricane Sally that we are pleased to share. Hurricane Sally hit the Gulf Coast of the United States in September 2020, causing flooding and damage in Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi. BBF joined Manna Food Bank to respond to those in need in Pensacola, Florida where over 24 inches of rain fell causing widespread flooding and a storm surge larger than 5 and a half feet.

Many of the food agencies in the area lost power and much of their available food in the storm. Through

Manna distributed more than 25,000 pounds of food, including fresh produce, at no cost to our partner agencies that lost their food inventory after the storm."

We are thankful for BBF supporters who donate to our disaster response work, which allows us to quickly react to hurricanes, wildfires, and other natural disasters. The 2020 Atlantic hurricane season was the most active in history and BBF was able to respond to the worst storms because of the generous support of our contributors. ■

## BBF Supports Medical Resident Education in Puerto Rico

By Liam Carstens



BBF is partnering with a Pittsburgh based organization, Computer Reach, that refurbishes computers to be utilized in the US and throughout the world. Computer Reach has developed and made available an all-inclusive mobile classroom that is a computer lab on a wheeled cart, which contains eight computers and accessories, tables, chairs, and even a projector with a screen.

This month, BBF will send one of the units to Ponce Medical School Foundation in Puerto Rico along with medical supplies and equipment. These items will be used in their newest program that places over 250 medical residents in hospitals and clinics. The residents have specialties in Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Pediatrics, Surgery, Emergency Medicine, Obstetrics

and Gynecology, Cardiology, Psychology and Psychiatry and they will work in the areas of Ponce, Mayaguez, San German, Manati and Bayamon. This program will both train physicians while addressing the shortage of doctors on the island.

We at BBF are pleased to be embarking on this project and we are thankful for the partnership with Computer Reach in Pittsburgh and with our partners throughout the world who have stressed to us the need for education items. We look forward to watching the impact of these mobile classrooms that are filling immediate needs while also bridging the gap between aid and sustainability by assisting in the training of physicians for the future. ■



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## Join Us for Our First Golf Event!

Who doesn't like to work hard and play hard? We sure do! You are cordially invited to join Brother's Brother Foundation and Blood Science Foundation for our Inaugural Golf Event to support local healthcare and educational programs.

**June 21, 2021**

**Fox Chapel Golf Club**  
426 Fox Chapel Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15238

**RSVP**

Laura Kelly at [Events@brothersbrother.org](mailto:Events@brothersbrother.org)



Thank You  
For Your Support!



## Thank You For All Your Support

It is no secret that 2020 was a difficult year for every one of us here at home and abroad. Brother's Brother Foundation would like to sincerely thank you for the support you have provided. With your encouragement, we have been able to provide support to many within the areas of Healthcare, Infrastructure, Disaster Response, and Education. We are committed more than ever to continuing our work and we owe a great deal of this to you! ■

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### Combined Federal Campaign

BBF's new Combined Federal Campaign number is 1228

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!

