

Architecture Team Returns from Puerto Rico

With changed lives and outlook after seeing so many in need

[Agenda](#) | Posted on October 11, 2017



The project neighborhood at Cano Martín Peña. 800 families in this neighborhood are now without a roof, and 70 families have lost everything. (Image taken from http://www.elvocero.com/gobierno/san-juan-busca-levantarse-tras-el-azote-del-huracan/article_8866c6ba-9f34-11e7-b140-e7702f7eabd5.htm)

Update: The architecture team returned from their trip on the evening of Friday, Oct. 6. Read the WSBT22 News story [here](#) and an interview with News Talk 94.9 W SJM [here](#) and abc57 News [here](#).

On Sunday, Oct. 1, at 5 a.m., Andrew von Maur, professor of architecture, Troy Homenchuk, adjunct professor, and 16 graduate architecture students, traveled to Puerto Rico to help with disaster relief efforts in the aftermath of hurricane Maria. They were there until October 6.

Victor Perez Andino, an Andrews architecture student, is from Puerto Rico and helped the school to connect with a project there. Beginning in July 2017, the graduate Urban Design Studio began to pursue a service project in collaboration with [Proyecto ENLACE del Caño Martín Peña](#). The purpose of the project is to assist with the design of new housing and public spaces in a flood-prone, impoverished informal settlement in central San Juan. The studio has been working on preliminary studies since late August, and planned to visit the site and engage the community in

a participatory design process beginning on Sept. 26, 2017. But then hurricane Irma hit, followed by hurricane Maria on September 20 — an event that will change the island forever.

Since then, the project scope has broadened significantly, and God opened all of the necessary doors for the team to help. The airline rebooked the group just in time for commercial flights to resume. The small private guest house complex there was spared major damage and can accommodate them. A fire fighter/EMS professional provided free disaster relief training and certified many of the team in First Aid/CPR/AED. They were able to purchase thousands of dollars in supplies and are taking bags and bags of things people need desperately: water filters, tarps, sanitary products, baby formula, batteries, flashlights, solar lamps and chargers, ropes, non-perishable food, water boots, chainsaws, tools, duct tape, two-way radios, first aid kits, plus Spanish GLOW -tracts (which were stuck in the packaging of the donated goods).

Puerto Rico is virtually without electricity or cell phone coverage, most streets in the neighborhoods they are visiting are still flooded. There are dead animals floating around, the airport is running at a limited capacity, there's a severe fuel shortage, hospitals and commercial establishments are unable to operate, 40% of Puerto Ricans are without a clean water supply... the people of Puerto Rico need prayers and help.

If you are willing to donate towards aid for affected families at Caño Martín Peña, you can give online at [Puerto Rice Project-AU Architecture](#) or send checks to the School of Architecture & Interior Design, 8435 E Campus Circle Drive, Berrien Springs, MI 49104. All proceeds will go directly to aid.

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