



Personal Reflections

9/29/2017

Dear IMSA Family,

Many of you know that I have family in Puerto Rico—mom, brother, and other extended family and you have been kind enough to ask me about their welfare. My mom and brother are physically safe. Through my mom, I have heard that my other family members are also safe. Emotionally and psychologically, my family and the people of Puerto Rico are suffering in ways that I have never seen in my 57 years of life. It breaks my heart to see through social media the devastation of the island. The desperation and stress levels continue to increase as the relief efforts and support begin to trickle in slowly. In the midst of this natural disaster, it is difficult for me to grasp exactly what I can do to help my family or assist my “neighbors” on the island.

The earthquake in Mexico City, the relief challenges left in Irma’s and Harvey’s wake in Houston and Florida have also strained many organizations. Sadly, the flooding in Bangladesh, Nepal, and India where over 1,000 people have died has barely registered in our newsfeed. The humanitarian and refugee crisis occurring in Bangladesh because of the displacement of Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar and concerns about ethnic cleansing are overwhelming.

However, paralysis and inaction have never been option for us at IMSA. We want to act, reach out, help. But what can we do?

Many of you have already identified agencies that you are supporting. Some of you have donated supplies, including our very own IRC, which collected water bottle donations. Some of you have asked me for suggestions of agencies for your consideration. I am aware that **UNICEF** and **Save the Children** are providing support on the island of Puerto Rico and in Mexico. The First Lady of Puerto Rico established a charity called **United for Puerto Rico**. The **Red Cross** is on the ground in **Puerto Rico** and in **Mexico**. You might also review **Charity Navigator** as you consider which organization to support.

Additional efforts are planned at IMSA. Be on the lookout for the Latinx Reading and an upcoming “Zumbathon.” I encourage you to get involved, not out of a sense of compulsion, but out of a sense of compassion.

Thank you for your support of those less fortunate around us.

Sincerely,

José M. Torres, PhD

President