

## Bringing Hope to Puerto Rico

*“Today is a beautiful, happy day...it is a pleasure to have people like you in our lives...God bless you forever and ever.”* – Samuel Cruz. And with that greeting on our first day in Puerto Rico, we launched into a remarkably fulfilling week of mission work.

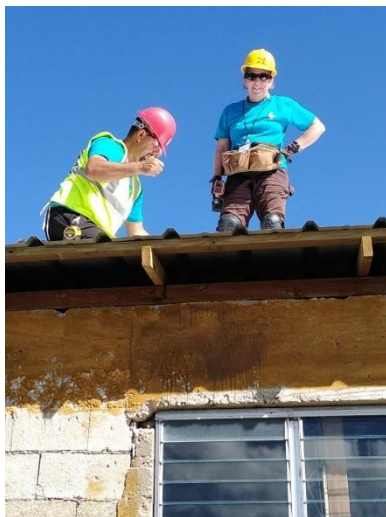
Now chronicled as one of the worst hurricanes in history, Maria left Puerto Rico devastated. It will be many years of recovery.



This year's mission brought us to the region of Arecibo on the Atlantic Coast. Our team of seventeen, from seven different Northern California churches, fanned out across the rebuilding of three homes. Each home suffered the wind and water damage only a major storm can bring.

In addition to meaningful work that was much appreciated, it was getting to know the people

we served and worked with that made this mission trip special. All of the families we served were gracious, heartwarming people. They were so welcoming to complete strangers coming into their homes. They trusted that we had their best interest at heart. They offered hospitality beyond their means.



Among our families were Glorianne, Agustin and baby Abigail Milagro (Miracle in Spanish). They are a young couple trying to restore their family home (Glorianne grew up there). Despite so many family challenges in the past year – post-partum depression, the passing of Glorianne’s mother, limited economic means, not to mention the loss of the second floor of their home, they are upbeat about the future.

Elizabeth, her husband and four-year old daughter had not yet lived in their newly built home when the hurricane hit. But, beaming from ear to ear, they were gleefully preparing to move in after we finished the last touches.

At our third house, the team thoroughly enjoyed working with Luis and Christian, the construction workers provided to guide the team. Even with our language differences, they were always positive and joyful as they guided us in the work.



**Agustin, Glorianne and Abigail**

As with all mission trips, one of the blessings is the team comradery we shared for a week. It is amazing, how after a day or two, we have bonded around a common purpose. We shared meals, bunkbeds inches apart, dribbling showers and touching devotional moments. Each day started with 6am cell phone alarms and ended with group time at dusk. We rallied around minor injuries, laughed at our own idiosyncrasies and shed a tear or two at tender reflections about living our faith in mission.



And on the final day of work, as is our tradition, we presented each family with a homemade quilt as a sign of hope and friendship, each with prayer knots tied by us and our home churches.

As we transition back to life in California, each of us bring back fond memories. As we ended our second mission to assist with the recovery, we are even more determined to keep coming back until the work is done. We are already anticipating our return in 2020.

Sincerely,

*The 2019 Puerto Rico California Nevada  
Conference Mission Team*