



All Hands and Hearts
Smart Response



November 2019



Mendez Baseball Field

Yabucoa, Puerto Rico

Final Report prepared for
the Thompson Family Benevolent Fund

Hurricane Maria

In September 2017, Hurricane Irma landed in Puerto Rico with the strongest winds the island has ever seen. Not long after, Hurricane Maria's ferocious 155 mph winds struck the island, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. Hurricane Maria first made landfall over the municipality of Yabucoa, affecting the 37,000 residents who call it home. This area bore the strongest brunt of the storm, where **hundreds of homes are still in need of basic roof repairs today.**

The interior of the island, the mountain municipality of Barranquitas, was also devastated by the storm and became nearly inaccessible for weeks due to landslides. Moreover, the city of Toa Baja suffered flooding from the hurricane itself, in addition to the subsequent release of dams, resulting in flood waters over 10 feet high.



Puerto Rico Program

All Hands and Hearts launched disaster-relief programs in Barranquitas and Yabucoa in January 2018, with 100-150 volunteers a day across both programs. As media attention began to dry up, and with it, our funding, we consolidated operations to the Yabucoa base in January 2019.

Our relief efforts in Yabucoa are still going strong and we've committed to continue work until March 2020. Teams have been working hard to re-seal roofs, install hurricane-resistant external doors and windows and sanitize homes from mold. We have also restored a half-dozen community centers, parks and baseball fields to bring back a sense of normalcy to the community.

Volunteer-powered Disaster Relief.



Mendez Baseball Field

Baseball is a cultural staple across Puerto Rico, and a healthy pastime for its communities. In neighborhoods around the island, Hurricane Maria crippled community spirit and cohesiveness when it wrecked parks and ball fields like Mendez. Without these recreational facilities, there haven't been many places for youth to play and for all generations to gather, escape the reality of their damaged homes and gain a sense of community again.

The Mendez Baseball Field once hosted the Little League World Series (Caribbean Region) in 2016 and countless community games for towns across the south of the island. The loss of this community hub has been difficult for the people of Yabucoa, who remember its glory days.



Our Work

During our time at the Mendez Baseball Field, our staff and volunteers:

- Levelled and resoiled the field and set bases
- Restored batting cages through pressure washing and repainting
- Conducted cement roof repair on the office building
- Replaced damaged galvalume paneling on the grandstand roof and visitors bleachers
- Painted all bleachers, handrails, walkways, hallways, dugouts and the pressbox
- Installed sinks, toilets and doors, and painted park bathrooms
- Conducted exterior rust and paint treatment on the perimeter of field and foul posts





Thanks to Your Support

The Mendez Field stands today as a proud, beautiful symbol of a community's spirit and recovery.

The Thompson family's generous donation covering the lion's share of the project budget jump-started the project, and what's more, catalyzed other funding to fully cover project expenses! The other funder is the Chicago Cubs.



Because the Thompson Family Benevolent Fund's gift enabled us to show striking progress on the field, when LISC* was touring the area this summer to select fields in need for Cubs Charities' component of a multi-field program, they settled on Mendez ([press release](#) regarding LISC's *Play Ball Again* program).



*[Local Initiatives Support Corporation](#)

Thank You

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to you for entrusting All Hands and Hearts with the generous financial resources to help the Yabucoa community's renewal of the Mendez Baseball Field.



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