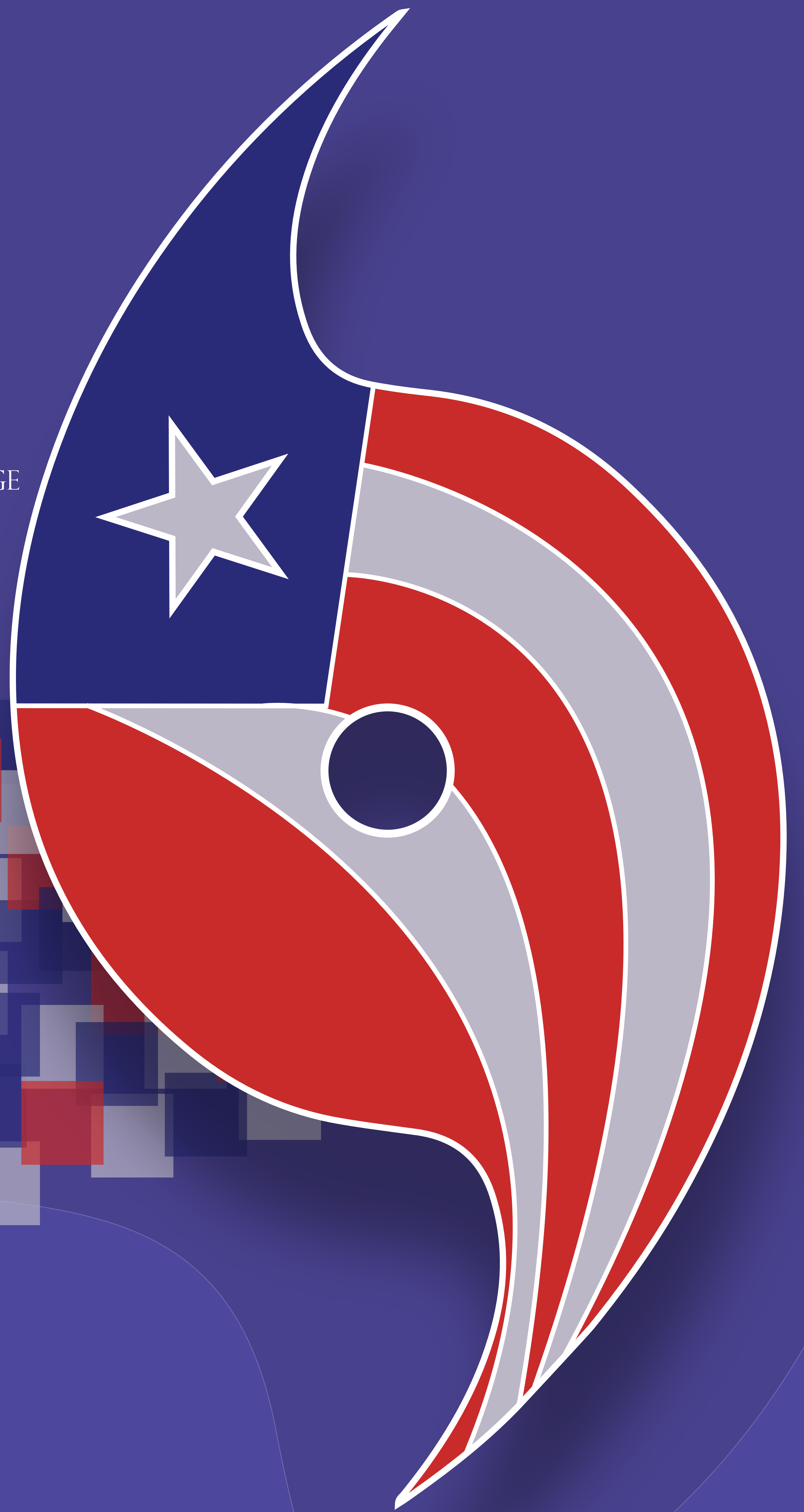


THE AFTERMATH OF MARIA

A STUDENT'S EXPERIENCE:

AFTER MARIA STRUCK PUERTO RICO ON SEPTEMBER 20TH, 2019, THE ISLAND'S INHABITANTS WERE STILL GOING THROUGH A NUMBER OF TRIBULATIONS. FOR MANY (INCLUDING MYSELF) THE AFTERMATH OF THIS PHENOMENON WAS THE MOST GRUELING EXPERIENCE OF THEIR LIVES. THE LACK OF ELECTRICAL POWER (WHICH WAS RESTORED IN ABOUT 9 MONTHS) CAUSED THE MAJORITY OF THE PROBLEMS PEOPLE HAD TO FACE. TRAFFIC JAMS, COLOSSAL LINES TO PURCHASE GAS, THE SHORTAGE OF MONEY IN BANKS AND ATMS, WERE THE ORDER OF THE DAY, THANKS TO THE ABSENCE OF ELECTRICITY. AT THE TIME I WAS A FRESHMAN IN COLLEGE BEING INTRODUCED TO THE STRICT LIFE OF AN ARCHITECT, OVERWHELMED I WAS, BY THE SCENARIOS BROUGHT UP BY THIS DISASTER. I WAS IN CHARGE OF FULFILLING THE BASIC NEEDS OF THE FAMILY. ON A DAILY BASIS I SET OUT EARLY IN THE MORNING TO DO BASIC CHORES THAT COULD BE DONE IN VERY LITTLE TIME UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES. MOST OF THE DAY WAS SPENT COLLECTING WATER, PURCHASING FOOD/ICE, AND TAKING MONEY OUT OF THE BANK BECAUSE OF THE ENDLESS LINES CAUSED BY THE NECESSITY OF THE PEOPLE. SITUATIONS LIKE THESE HELPED ME GROW INTO A MORE PATIENT MAN, HOWEVER I ALSO BECAME MORE EXHAUSTED PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY AS TIME PASSED BY THE CONTINUOUS GRIND. THANKFULLY I WAS OFFERED TO STAY AT THE STUDENT DORMS IN MY UNIVERSITY UNTIL THINGS CLEARED OUT AND THE POWER WAS RESTORED IN MY COMMUNITY.



DISASTER RELIEF: WHAT WAS DONE RIGHT & WHAT COULD'VE BEEN DONE BETTER

THE COLLEGE I CURRENTLY STUDY AT OFFERED ME A PLACE AT THEIR DORMS FOR AN ENTIRE YEAR FREE OF COST. STUDENTS WHO FIND THEMSELVES IN A SIMILAR SITUATION MUST NOT BE ASHAMED TO BE VOCAL ABOUT THEIR CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES, THEY SHOULD AT ALL COSTS EXPRESS THEIR CONCERNS TO THE HIGHER UPS IN THEIR INSTITUTIONS. COLLEGES COULD COME TO AN AGREEMENT WITH NEARBY DORMS, SO THEY COULD BE CAPABLE OF ASSISTING THEIR STUDENTS WITH TEMPORARY HOUSING EVEN WHEN THEIR DORMS ARE FULL. OVERALL I MUST SAY THAT I WAS BLESSED BY THE AMOUNT OF AID I RECEIVED AFTER MARIA, I WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CONTINUE MY STUDIES IF THESE OPPORTUNITIES WERE NOT OFFERED TO ME.