

Sabana Grande organization receives grant, provisions for humanitarian aid

By Wallace J. de la Vega

SABANA GRANDE (SACED Media) -- A local non-profit organization signed an agreement with the Puerto Rico Lions Clubs, while receiving thousands of personal items for Hurricane Maria victims who still have special needs.

Ariel R. Cruz, Puerto Rico Council of Lions Governors President, and Jose D. Pietri, Sabana Grande Corporation for Economic and Community Development (SACED) President, signed the agreement at a ceremony while presenting the first portion of \$104,395 raised by the Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF). The signing was held March 14 at the Bayamon Lions Club. The ear-marked funds add to previous Lions donations that altogether will total some \$700,000.

"Once again the Lions Clubs say 'present' to continue helping so many victims of Hurricane Maria", said Pietri. "This load is very special because it goes to people who have medical conditions and other situations and still need help".

Currently, 25 SACED employees are handling about 1,000 cases within six municipalities in Puerto Rico's southwest region as part of FEMA's Disaster Case Management Program.

The aid received this time will be used mainly to provide medical equipment and personal items needed by bed bound and sick people. Donations include gasoline power plants for respiratory equipment and other specialized medical equipment. Also included are special food items, personal and bed diapers, propane gas tanks, insect repellent, in-line water heaters and solar lamps. Deliveries go mostly to rural areas where public services are unstable.

Speaking on behalf of the Lions, Cruz said: "In this effort we are glad to share this project with SACED, our friends in Sabana Grande, who will also collaborate with us in the repair of homes damaged by the hurricane in their region". He added that "with that first delivery, between 500 and 600 families will be served".

Taking off with a loaded truck, the SACED team went into action immediately. Coordinating with the Ponce Playa Lions Club, the first delivery in this southern city included a power plant and an assortment of medical and food items. The recipient was Janice Alicea, mother of two daughters with cerebral palsy.

Delivery of that same assortment of aid was coordinated with Lions from Penuelas. It was delivered in Flamboyan sector to bed bound, 76-year old, Jesus Arroyo.

"I know we are all tired", said group supervisor Jose F. Valentin 13 hours after the team's early morning departure from Sabana Grande. "But remember with satisfaction all we have done. Today several people will sleep better than they have since the hurricane. Tomorrow we shall continue".

SACED, recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, was founded 2010 as a development tool for the Sabana Grande community and the island's southwest region. It provides logistic, material and financial support to youth substance abuse prevention coalitions, student tutoring and meeting rooms for local and regional community groups and civic entities.

With some 1.4 million member in 210 countries, Lions Clubs International is the largest service clubs organizations in the world. LCIF provides grants to finance

diverse humanitarian projects worldwide, including those related to eyesight, hunger, pediatric cancer, the environment and diabetes.

Photo 1 - 103

Let to right: Miriam Vazquez, Jose Pietri, Ariel R. Cruz y Carmen R. de Jesus.

Photo 2

SACED personnel loads material aid on a truck at Bayamon Lions Club .

Credit: Saced Media