



Shrinking time between disaster and recovery.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SBP AmeriCorps Service Continues in Puerto Rico

By Eric Rushton, Washington Conservation Corps

HUMACAO, PUERTO RICO (February 8, 2018) – AmeriCorps programs across the country have sent more than 2,000 members to aid in hurricane relief since fall 2017. SBP is one such program and is currently serving the island of Puerto Rico, which suffers tremendously even four months after Hurricane Maria struck.

“SBP aims to shrink the time between disaster and recovery. After a natural disaster, many people slip through the cracks of government programs or the money and help they receive is not enough. SBP fills in the gaps and helps people return home as quickly as possible,” explains Project Lead Margot Habets, who is based in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Margot is on her second deployment to Puerto Rico and feels troubled by the lack of relief the large population is receiving; “I deployed to Puerto Rico in October but this deployment has been very different than that one. I'm really surprised at how slow recovery can be and how many people are still waiting for help. It's hard to wrap your head around the extent of damage that Hurricane Maria caused ...”

“People don't see disaster relief workers every day, so I like to think we lift people's moods when they see us working in their neighborhoods and on their houses, just as a reminder that people are still here and still working and will continue to do so.” she adds.

Although disaster relief can be heartbreaking, Margot feels good about the services SBP offers the community; “Almost every single person I've met in Puerto Rico has greeted my team with a smile and is so thankful to talk to someone about repairing their house. When assessing one house we found out that the wife was pregnant during the storm and their baby was now a month old. Alexis, the father, had found a place for his wife and now two children to stay while he fixed up and cleaned their house, but he needed help. It was a great feeling to



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know that we were going to help him muck his house and seal his roof so that their whole family could try to return to normal life.”

“Deployments are intense, demanding, and stressful but they're also extremely rewarding because you know that you are serving communities and people that need your help more than anyone.”

She continues, “For the most part, I think we've handled the ups and downs of deployment as a team really well. The hardest part for me is seeing how little some things have changed ... to think that no power or a leaking roof, or moldy cabinets is the new normal [is tough].”

AmeriCorps engages more than 75,000 members in intensive service annually to serve through nonprofit, faith-based, and community organizations at 21,000 locations across the country. These members help communities tackle pressing problems while mobilizing millions of volunteers for the organizations they serve. Since 1994, more than 980,000 Americans have provided more than 1.3 billion hours of service to their communities and country through AmeriCorps.

AmeriCorps is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency that engages millions of Americans in service through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Social Innovation Fund, and Volunteer Generation Fund programs, and leads the President's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. For more information, visit NationalService.gov



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About SBP

SBP's mission is to shrink time between disaster and recovery. Since its founding in 2006 in St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana following the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina, SBP has rebuilt homes for more than 1,400 families with the help of 180,000 volunteers in New Orleans, LA; Baton Rouge, LA; Joplin, MO; Staten Island, NY; Rockaway, NY; Monmouth and Ocean Counties, NJ; San Marcos, TX; Houston, TX; Columbia, SC; and White Sulphur Springs, WV.

SBP's model is enhanced by AmeriCorps members who manage worksites and clients, and train the organization's volunteers nationally.

Through its Disaster Resilience and Recovery Lab (DRRL), SBP works to share lessons learned, prevent common barriers to recovery and help communities utilize SBP's standardized, repeatable and proven-effective model.

To learn more, visit www.SBPUSA.org and like/follow SBP on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram @SBPUSA

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