

THE BURLINGTON/ PUERTO CABEZAS SISTER CITY PROGRAM
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WWW.UVM.EDU/SISTERCITY

Report on Hurricane Relief Fundraising

Two category 4 hurricanes, ETA and IOTA, smashed into Puerto Cabezas during November 2020, causing massive damage to homes, livestock, and agricultural and fishing equipment. Burlington, a sister city with Puerto Cabezas since 1984, began a fundraising drive to help the residents during this emergency. The Burlington Mayor's office led off the effort with a donation of \$1000. Local media helped get the word out, especially TV Channels 3, 5, and 17. Charlotte Dennett posted an essay on the internet publication *Toward Freedom* that reached people outside of Vermont. The outpouring of help was impressive. Between a GoFundMe site and mailed donations we raised almost \$12,000.

<https://towardfreedom.org/story/admin/a-cry-for-help-burlingtons-sister-city-in-nicaragua-is-a-major-disaster-zone/>

For how to best distribute the funds we relied on our long time partners in Bilwi. Reports were that the government had done an excellent job during the early hours of the storm, so acknowledging the semi-official relationship between Burlington and the municipality we sent \$5000 to the Puerto Cabezas alcaldia with the agreement that it be earmarked to help people from the communities who had lost their livelihoods.

Other donations went to Kupia Kumi Aslika, an umbrella coalition of groups formed to meet needs in marginalized Miskito communities affected by the floods, and the Nidia White Movimiento de Mujeres, whose focus was providing shelter to women and children made homeless following the hurricane. We sent a donation for help replacing the tower of the indigenous language Radio Yapti Tasba, an essential vehicle for communicating news and information to remote Miskitu communities. A fourth recipient was Partners in Health of Maine, a medical group providing equipment and supplies to hospitals in the region, and a fifth donation went to a woodworking school for disabled divers, teaching them woodworking skills so they can earn a living.

Thanks to all the people who donated. The donations were put to good use immediately. If you'd like email updates about sister city activities send us your email address.

Saludos y los mejores deseos.

Dan Higgins

The Sister City Program is a 501c3 non-profit organization, EIN ID 03-0302808