

CienciaPR celebrates 15 years with a stellar gathering of spokespeople "Cómplices de la Ciencia Boricua" [1]

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Under the slogan "Puerto Rico es ciencia" (Puerto Rico is Science), the scientific organization Ciencia Puerto Rico launched a new donation program called "Cómplices de la Ciencia Boricua" (Ciencia Boricua Allies). In addition to celebrating 15 years of the non-profit collective, "Puerto Rico es ciencia" seeks to promote donations and support the organization's sustainability so that they can continue putting science in service of Puerto Rico.

The "Cómplices de la Ciencia Boricua" donation program features prominent spokespersons such as former MLB player Carlos Delgado Hernández, epidemiologist Dr. Fabiola Cruz López, journalist Benjamin Torres Gotay, scientist and founder of the organization Dr. Daniel Colón Ramos, and aspiring astronaut Dr. Yajaira Sierra Sastre.

"Throughout the past 15 years, CienciaPR has put the knowledge, example, and connections of our community to work for Puerto Rico with projects that impact education, communication, and scientific careers. Over the next 15 years, those who join the "Cómplices de la Ciencia Boricua" program will help us establish a free resource portal for teachers and students; improve the training of girls and women in fields where we are underrepresented; and create more collaborative spaces for our communities to use science to address their needs", commented the organization's executive director, Dr. Giovanna Guerrero-Medina.

"Science impacts all sectors of Puerto Rican society, as our spokespersons point out. That is why beyond science our mission is one of civic responsibility and social justice," she said.

CienciaPR, founded in 2006, is the largest network of Puerto Rican scientists in the world. Its mission has always been to democratize access to knowledge and scientific careers, and to make science a tool for the benefit of Puerto Rico.

"The pandemic made the importance of science for Puerto Rico very clear. Without a connected, engaged, and empowered scientific community, I don't know if we would have been able to tackle the challenges of COVID-19 the way we have," said Dr. Colón-Ramos, who is also a professor at Yale University and president of the Puerto Rico Science Coalition. "There are other challenges, such as climate change, that benefit from a scientific perspective. Our country needs a community of prepared scientists to help address these challenges for the benefit of Puerto Rican society and humanity. The CienciaPR community and programs have been there, and will be there to help prepare our society to respond to these new challenges. That is why we ask people to support the organization with their donation," he added.

CienciaPR, through its programs, projects and collaborations with scientists, educators, community leaders, and non-governmental and governmental organizations, has impacted hundreds of thousands of people in and outside of Puerto Rico through education, communication, and professional and community training of Puerto Rican scientific talent of all ages.

Among the outstanding organizational achievements is that they have impacted more than 7,000 students through programs like Semillas de Triunfo [3], which mentors girls who want to become scientists, and Ciencia al Servicio [4], which works to connect scientists and educators in Puerto Rico. CienciaPR has also created hundreds of educational resources such as the book ¡Ciencia Boricua! [5], the first anthology of stories about science and Puerto Rico. During the pandemic, the organization created the community project Aquí Nos Cuidamos [6], which was recently recognized among 189 projects from 80 countries [7] as one of the Science Breakthroughs of the Year.

The collective has demonstrated its commitment to Puerto Rican communities in critical moments after emergencies such as Hurricane Maria, when they organized funding support for researchers [8], and during the 2020 earthquakes, when they delivered more than 130 emergency educational kits to teachers in southern Puerto Rico [9]. In addition to this, the nonprofit leads the Yale Ciencia Academy [10], which has trained more than 200 young scientists, such as Dr. Fabiola Cruz López; and they have published more than 800 articles in collaboration with local and international media, nearly 100 of them since the beginning of the COVID-19 emergency [11].

"Science is present in everything, even in baseball. For the past 15 years, CienciaPR has been responsible for highlighting science in our daily lives and our culture for the benefit of our children and communities. That is why I support the work they do and I invite people to do the same, to make sure that there is CienciaPR for a while!", invited former Major League Baseball player Carlos Delgado Hernández in a video of the "Puerto Rico es Ciencia" campaign [12].

Those interested in supporting CienciaPR can make a donation at www.yoapoyocienciapr.org [13]. On Tuesday, November 30, the organization will be participating of "Giving Tuesday" and on that day there will be multiple opportunities to double donations through matching funds. With a donation of \$60 or more at www.yoapoyocienciapr.org [13] people can become "Cómplices de la Ciencia Boricua" and receive various benefits [14].

- Tags:**
- 15 aniversario [15]
 - cómplices de la ciencia boricua [16]

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Links

- [1] https://www.cienciapr.org/en/blogs/equipo-informa/cienciapr-celebrates-15-years-stellar-gathering-spokespeople-complices-de-la [2] https://www.cienciapr.org/en/user/moefeliu [3] https://www.cienciapr.org/es/seeds-success/semillas-de-triunfo-programa-de-chicas-embajadoras-stem [4] https://www.cienciapr.org/es/ciencia-al-servicio [5] https://www.cienciapr.org/node/8382 [6] http://www.aquinoscuidamos.org [7] https://www.cienciapr.org/es/blogs/equipo-informa/proyecto-aqui-nos-cuidamos-de-cienciapr-reconocido-como-avances-del-ano-en [8] https://www.cienciapr.org/es/external-news/ayuda-para-investigadores-post-huracan-maria [9] https://www.cienciapr.org/es/kit-ciencia-al-servicio-para-educadores-stem [10] http://www.cienciapr.org/yca [11] https://www.cienciapr.org/es/tags/covid19-cienciaboricua [12] https://youtu.be/A7Pkf7HTwPU [13] https://hipgive.org/es/campaign/latinxgive2021/por_15_anos_mas_de_ciencia_boricua [14] https://www.cienciapr.org/es/blogs/equipo-informa/hazte-complice-de-la-ciencia-boricua [15] https://www.cienciapr.org/en/tags/15-aniversario [16] https://www.cienciapr.org/en/tags/complices-de-la-ciencia-boricua