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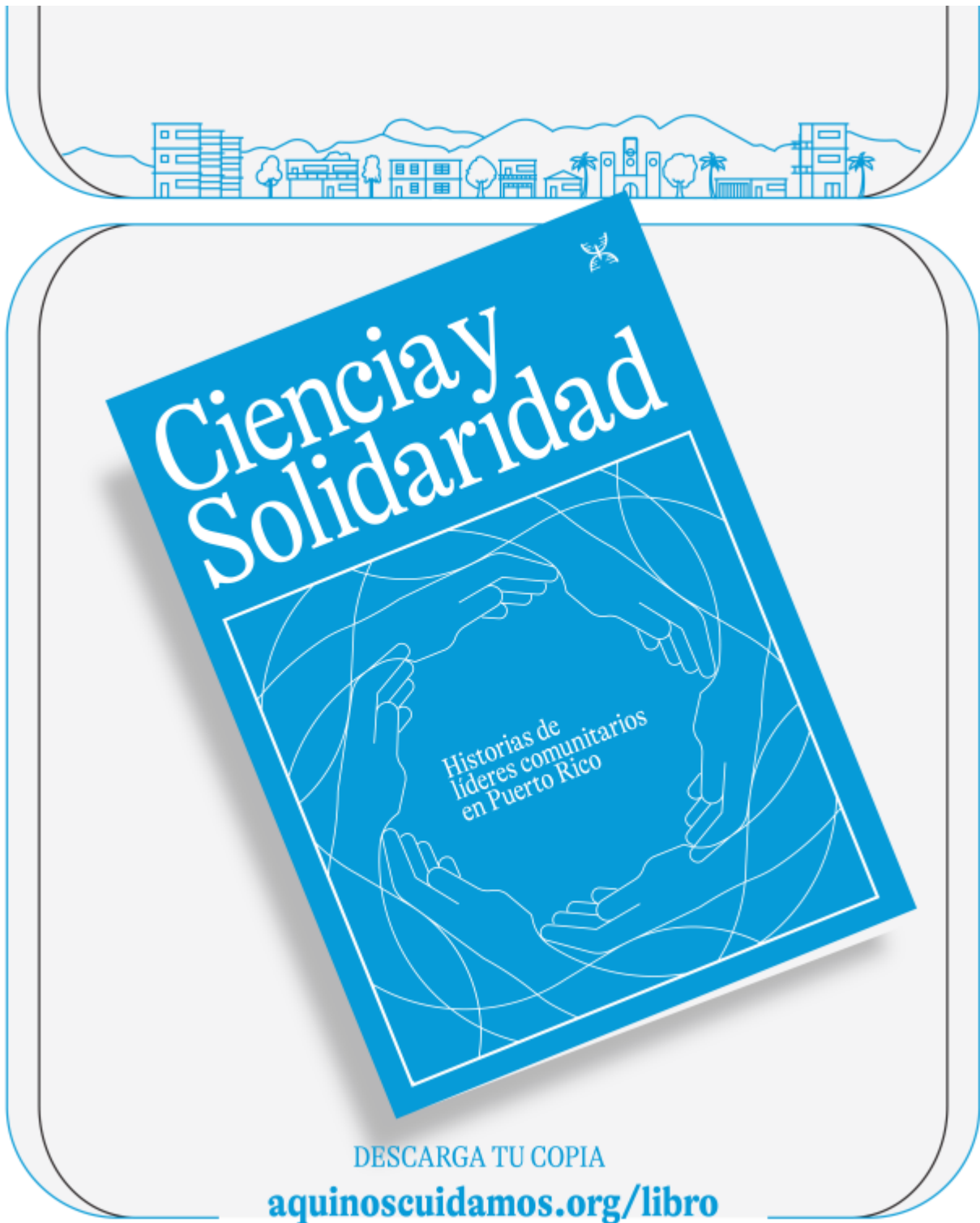
CienciaPR Creates Digital Book "Science and Solidarity" to Celebrate Community Leaders ^[1]

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Cover of the book "Ciencia y solidaridad: Historias de líderes comunitarios en Puerto Rico".

San Juan, PR – In celebration of Community Leaders and Groups Week (Semana del Líder y los Grupos Comunitarios y de la Autogestión Comunitaria), which takes place the first week of March, the non-profit organization Ciencia Puerto Rico (CienciaPR) today published the digital book Science and Solidarity: Stories of Community Leaders in Puerto Rico [3] (Ciencia y solidaridad: Historias de líderes comunitarios en Puerto Rico). The text highlights the stories of 11 community leaders who use science to address the needs and priorities of their communities.

"Leaders play a crucial role in putting science at the service of their communities. These individuals have a rich understanding of the realities, needs, and priorities of their people, which positions them to use science to create contextualized solutions," said Dr. Mónica Feliú Mójer, director of the Public Engagement with Science Unit at CienciaPR. "That is why over the past four years, CienciaPR has made efforts to establish strong relationships with leaders, providing them with tools and opportunities to strengthen existing solutions within their communities," emphasized the science communicator.

The leaders portrayed in Science and Solidarity reside in San Juan, Guayama, Loíza, Trujillo Alto, Ponce, Mayagüez, and Yabucoa, although their impact extends beyond their municipalities. They serve diverse communities, including public housing residents, older adults, people with disabilities, and the Deaf community, among others. They are: Yamilette Luciano Ruiz, Frances Felton, Jeffrey Rivera Sanabria, Jessica Galletti, Mirta Colón Pellecier, Lohary Munet Piñeiro, Sor Faustina Rodríguez, Lenis Rodríguez Amaro, Aslín Estrada Díaz, Evelyn Medina Bonilla, and Lucía Santana Benítez. All were participants in Aquí Nos Cuidamos, a community and multimedia project promoting prevention and well-being, and the Community Science Laboratory (Laboratorio de Ciencia Comunitaria or CienciaCoLab), which supports leaders in carrying out local projects. Both are initiatives of the Public Engagement in Science Program of CienciaPR.

The book Science and Solidarity: Stories of Community Leaders in Puerto Rico [3] is available in Spanish for free download on the CienciaPR website, www.cienciapr.org [4], and at www.aquinoscuidamos.org/libro [3]. The book will also be available for purchase on Amazon and all the proceeds will support CienciaPR's community engagement efforts. The organization will be sharing posts on Facebook and Twitter (@CienciaPR) and on Instagram (@ciencia.pr) during Community Leaders and Groups Week and the entire month of March.

Excerpts from Science and Solidarity: Stories of Community Leaders in Puerto Rico

The profiles included in Science and Solidarity highlight the trajectory, philosophies of community leadership, and how different leaders view the role of science in communities in Puerto Rico, among other topics. Below are some quotes from the community leaders portrayed in the book.

"A true community leader genuinely cares about what happens in their community not only because it affects them personally. Additionally, that leader must reflect on key questions such as: What can I achieve in my community? Where can I make a difference? and What are the means to achieve the community's goals?" – Mirta Colón Pellecier, participant in Aquí Nos Cuidamos and CienciaCoLab, and president of the Coalition of Public Housing Residents of the Metropolitan Area.

"A community leader must work neutrally, not being swayed by colors or religion. Focus on working towards the solution. If there are complaints, provide solutions and listen, don't argue." – Lenis Rodríguez Amaro, participant in Aquí Nos Cuidamos and CienciaCoLab, and leader of the "Grupo Apoyo Yabucoa."

Being part of Aquí Nos Cuidamos, "has helped me to continue educating myself. To see the importance of educating myself in all branches of different types of science, mental health, laws, biological, even spiritual." – Sor Faustina Rodríguez, participant in Aquí Nos Cuidamos and CienciaCoLab, and director of the Ferrán and Punta Diamante Service Center.

"Listening is very important. Listen to those residents because that's where we [the leaders] will draw from to do what we want to do." – Jeffrey Rivera Sanabria, participant in Aquí Nos Cuidamos, and community leader at Residencial Luis Llorens Torres.

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