

Recognizing Community Leadership at "Ciencia y Solidaridad" Event ^[1]

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Líderes comunitarios homenajeados presentes en la actividad (de izquierda a derecha): Lohary Munet Piñero, Lenis Rodríguez, Sor Faustina Rodríguez y Yamilette Luciano

Ciencia Puerto Rico (CienciaPR) and Junta Innovadora Comunal Villa del Carmen celebrated on Wednesday, December 17, 2025, the "Ciencia y Solidaridad" (Science and Solidarity) event,

paying tribute to community leaders while exploring the way science is in communities' daily life.

The activity, held at the Villa del Carmen Community Center, honored 11 leaders whose stories of service and community transformation are documented in the book of the same name, published by CienciaPR.

Among the honorees present at the activity were Lohary Munet Piñeiro, president of Junta Innovadora Comunal Villa del Carmen; Yamilette Luciano, leader of the Deaf Community of western Puerto Rico; Sister Faustina Rodríguez, coordinator of Youth Ministry at the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico and former director of Centro de Servicios Ferrán y Punta Diamante; and Lenis Rodríguez, from the Camino Nuevo community in Yabucoa. All were participants in CienciaPR's community projects "Aquí Nos Cuidamos" and Laboratorio de Ciencia Comunitaria.

"This event celebrates something fundamental: community leaders are agents of change who use scientific thinking in their daily work, even though we don't always call it that," explained Dr. Mónica I. Feliú Mójér, Director of CienciaPR's Public Engagement Unit. "Observing, asking questions, experimenting, and adapting solutions are practices our communities have used for generations," she added.

During the evening, about 40 people participated in interactive experiences, such as completing crossword puzzles, assembling jigsaw puzzles, and writing or drawing on a "public expression board." The activities were designed to demonstrate that science is an integral part of our daily lives, from the kitchen to the community garden, and to promote fellowship amongst attendees.

"It was exciting to see how attendees explored together the science they already practice without perhaps knowing it," expressed Xavier Ortiz Torres, coordinator of CienciaPR's "Ciencia y Solidaridad" project. "We wanted people to see that science is part of their culture and a powerful tool for community development," he added.

The event was sponsored by Fundación Puertorriqueña de las Humanidades, supported by Cristalia, and attended by Alexis "Leky" Vega, special assistant to the Honorable Marlese Sifre, and Orlando Delgado, director of the Office of Territorial Planning of the Autonomous Municipality of Ponce, representing the Mayor.

"This is science and solidarity. From the youngest to the oldest... working to benefit the community," noted Lohary Munet Piñeiro, community leader and president of Junta Innovadora Comunal Villa del Carmen during the activity. "It's teamwork. Each person has their expertise, their skills, their abilities and talents, and they put those abilities and talents at the service of the community," she concluded.

Tags:

- [Ciencia y solidaridad](#) ^[3]
 - [Laboratorio de Ciencia Comunitaria](#) ^[4]
 - [Aquí Nos Cuidamos](#) ^[5]
 - [ciencia comunitaria](#) ^[6]
 - [Featured](#) ^[7]
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