

From Responding to Maria to Mental Health: 2017 Yale Ciencia Fellows Impact Their Communities Through Outreach ^[1]

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Diana Medina (front center with the ball cap), a 2017 Yale Ciencia Fellow, co-organized her local March for Science as part of her outreach project.

The [Yale Ciencia Academy](#) ^[3] (YCA) aims to develop well-rounded scientific leaders and professionals. Completing a science outreach project is one aspect of the program that helps fellows advance towards this goal. The **2017 class of YCA Fellows** ^[4] led and implemented a series of science outreach projects to put into practice the communication, teaching and leadership skills they learned during their year in the program. The projects included various podcasts, a full-day symposium on deaf mental health, and a new blog in a major Spanish-language newspaper. Due to the impact of hurricanes Irma and Maria on the Caribbean region, several students used their outreach plans to respond and contribute to relief and recovery efforts. Some of the hurricane relief related projects included a series of mindfulness and mental health workshops at community centers, a public health education campaign, and workshops to prevent infectious diseases. Overall, 36 Fellows completed 30 projects (some of them collaborated) to impact more than 5,450 people.

Below, we highlight some examples of the outreach projects completed by the 2017 Yale Ciencia Fellows. We invite you to check them out, use them as resources, and share them with your students, colleagues, and networks.

BLOGS, PODCASTS, AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Currents: Spectrum Podcast Mini-Series [5] (Gabriela Bosque, Yale University) – Series of podcast interviews with biomedical graduate students at Yale to (1) explore the intersection between their scientific identity and a more personal identity, and (2) examine individual perspectives on how they view science careers given the current social/political context. The first interview focused on the 2017 March for Science. The second one was about being undocumented while in STEM. The third dealt with being a Muslim refugee while in STEM.

BoriCiencia [6] (Rebecca Parodi, Aileen García, Coriness Pineyro, Jose J. Rosado, Karl Bosque, and Lymarie Diaz, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras and Medical Sciences Campus) – BoriCiencia is a monthly column in El Nuevo Día newspaper through which a group of young Puerto Rican scientists humanize science and scientists.

Ciencia En Tus Manos (Science In Your Hands) [7] (Marcos Ramos-Benítez, University of Puerto Rico, Medical Sciences Campus and Priscila Rodríguez-García, The Ohio State University) – Ciencia en Tus Manos is a Facebook page that shares original “memes” and infographics to make science simple and entertaining. The page frequently explains controversial scientific topics, the basic science of diseases, or the science behind “everyday activities.”



Snapshot of Ciencia en Tus Manos.

The page was co-created by Marcos Ramos-Benítez. Priscila Rodríguez-García contributed a post about Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) [8].

Asthma: A Multifactorial Disease [9] (Nathalie Fuentes-Ortiz, Penn State University) – How do race, ethnicity, and sex hormones influence asthma? In this blog post, Nathalie discusses how personal experiences led her to investigate this question as a graduate student.

Challenges of Being a Latina Scientist: Embracing Your Culture ^[10] (Luz Cumba-García, Mayo Clinic) – In this blog post, Luz asks: how do you balance your multiple identities? How can you embrace who you are while adapting to a new culture and place?

Science Para Mi Gente ^[11] (Jeannette Huaman, City University of New York) – This blog shares the personal experiences and perspectives of being a Latinx scientist.

Letter to My Younger Self: What Do You Do When You Don't Know What to Do? ^[12] (Antonieta Salguero-Rivera, Johns Hopkins and Harvard University) – This blog post offers sound advice for young (and not so young) students about things they can do to prepare for success, even when they are not 100% sure about what they want to do professionally.

The Email That Changed my Life: Advice About Undergraduate Research Programs ^[13] (Naiomy Ríos-Arce, Michigan State University) – In this post, Naiomy shares how her summer research experiences prepared her for graduate school and offers tips and resources for students interested in applying to such programs.

EVENTS

Language and Deaf Mental Health: Interpreting in Context ^[14] (Emmanuel “Mani” García, Hunter College) – Mani hosted a one-day symposium, in collaboration with Lexington Center for Deaf Mental Health, to share research on the cognitive, emotional, and social impacts of language-based exclusion with the deaf community and sign language interpreters. The symposium featured three speakers, including the YCA fellow, as well as a panel, skits, and breakout discussion groups.



Image from the leptospirosis and arboviral diseases workshop led by Fabiola Cruz and José Javier Rosado after Hurricane María.

Educating about Leptospirosis and Arboviral Diseases ^[15]

(Fabiola Cruz and José Rosado, University of Puerto Rico, Medical Sciences Campus) – Fellows organized a workshop for healthcare professionals and volunteers about the risk of infectious diseases after

a natural disaster like hurricane María and how to differentiate leptospirosis from more common arboviral diseases like dengue, Chikungunya and Zika.

Neurobiology of Endocannabinoids ^[16] (Cristina Román-Vendrell, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras) – In collaboration with another graduate student, Cristina organized an open public presentation at a gathering spot in Old San Juan to talk about cannabis, which recently became legal for medical use in Puerto Rico, its botanical properties and agricultural history as well as its effects on the brain and body.

Mental-Health and Self-Care Group (Christina Estrada, University of Cincinnati) – Christina organized and hosted an intimate gathering where graduate students could openly and safely discuss mental health challenges, which many face in graduate school, and self-care strategies to help them deal with the stress and pressures.

March for Science, College Station, Texas (Diana Medina, Texas A&M University) – Diana was one of the organizers of the March for Science in College Station, TX, where Texas A&M is.

PhUn School Visit (Orlando Torres-Rodríguez, Ponce Health Sciences University) – Orlando organized a high school visit where he did science demonstrations, as part of the American Physiological Society's PhUn Week.

Teen Suicide Prevention (Carolina Vélez-Grau, Columbia University) – Carolina offered a talk in NYC to orient parents about suicide prevention among Latinx teens, which is the topic of her research.

Mental Health Relief Post-Hurricane Maria (Kimberly Santos Avilés, Ponce School of Medicine) – Kimberly visited emergency shelters and provided brief crisis interventions and mindfulness techniques to people displaced by Hurricane Maria. She gave workshops for children, adolescents and their parents at various schools where she encouraged discussions on the effects the hurricane had on participants' emotional well-being. She also gave educational presentations to help parents identify emotional disturbances and depression in their children.

K-12 LESSONS

Cell Biology High School Lesson [17] (Nicolle Rosa-Mercado, Yale University) – Nicolle developed a 10th grade level lesson to teach students about the cell, its parts and their functions.

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