

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Ithaca, New York.....

'El coqui siempre canta: Anniversary Benefit Concert to support Puerto Rico rebuild and Border Family Relief'

On the heels of last year's successful benefit event 'El Coqui Siempre Canta', organizers are presenting The Anniversary festival event on **November 7, 2018 from 6 to 9pm at the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca at 306 N. Aurora Street**. Organizers Sally Ramirez, Denice Karamardian, Colleen Kattau and Patricia Fernandez de Castro of the Latino Civic Association reached the conclusion that, in addition to the remaining need for rebuild efforts in Puerto Rico, a new crisis has developed on the U.S. southern border with migrant families and children living in limbo and despair.

Efforts this year will expand to support children and youth detained at the border, either separated from their families or unaccompanied, as well as migrant children and families. Proceeds will be applied directly by the Latino Civic Association of Tompkins County and through organizations they work with to support these needs. Additional sponsors for the event include Tompkins County Immigrant Rights Coalition, Village at Ithaca, Group 73 of Amnesty International, and Cornell Latino Studies Program, among others.

The event begins at 6pm with a pot luck dinner of Latin Cuisine provided by **New Roots Charter School** and local eateries, accompanied by the music of **Carlos Gutierrez** and low key entertainment with sleight of hand cards by magician **James Warren**. This is followed at 7pm by a concert, brief reports on the relief efforts accomplished in Puerto Rico from the 2017 event and goals for 2018 beneficiaries, and stories and songs Puerto Rico by **Juliette Corazon and Abbe Lyons**. Three performing musical groups consist of participants **Colleen Kattau, Rich DePaolo, Denice Karamardian, Molly MacMillan, Doug Robinson, Sally Ramirez, Jorge T. Cuevas, Eric Aceto**. Also featured is poet and storyteller **Eliud**

Nieves. Suggested donation is \$15 or \$25 per family, though no one will be turned away.

The successful response from 2017 El Coqui Siempre Canta was significant and an outpouring of donations continued into the 2018 season, administered by the LCA. According to Fernando de Aragon, treasurer of LCA, “It was inspiring to see how quickly and selflessly people in Tompkins reacted after the hurricane hit. Working with each other or on their own, multiple community groups and individuals organized concerts, bonfires, races, dances and many other events to raise funds. We were proud to collaborate, organize or otherwise participate in many of them.”

A total of \$14,200 in monetary funds was received and delivered to the island as well as multiple carloads of materials delivered to drop-off sites in Binghamton, Utica, and Rochester. “We identified Puerto Rican grassroots organizations that were already running community empowerment projects and were well placed to ramp up or redirect their work towards hurricane recovery efforts.” The major beneficiaries included the community kitchens of CDPEC, Inc. (Comedores Sociales), Resilient Power PR, Brigada Solidaria del Oeste, Casa Pueblo, Donde de Resilencia – Departamento de la Comida, TECHO – Housing Construction with Youth, and the Convento Jesus Mediador which has been very active assisting and empowering the people of the Bayamon community. The balance of proceeds directly benefited several communities on the island associated with Ithaca based families, including Ponce, Arecibo and Mayaguez.

With a new hurricane season in full swing, recent news has indicated how incomplete the recovery of Maria has been. Puerto Rico matters. Migrant families matter and any child yearning for a better life than one of violence and starvation deserves our attention and help. Anyone wishing to donate who cannot attend the November 7th event is welcome to send fully tax deductible donations to:

Latino Civic Association of Tompkins County P.O. Box 6532, Ithaca, N.Y. 14851

We hope you will choose to come and share our solidarity with families whose lives are stranded at our southern borders and the communities of Puerto Rico struggling to rebuild their lives.

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