

Ox Ridge Students Help With Hurricane Relief in Puerto Rico, Texas

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In the wake of a devastating hurricane season, Ox Ridge students decided they wanted to help their peers who face the daunting task of putting their lives back together.

For one Ox Ridge teacher, Elsa Agosto, the impact of Hurricane Maria and the students' efforts has been more personal.

Principal Luke Forshaw noted that Agosto, who teaches Spanish, has family in Puerto Rico.

Maria knocked out much of the island's infrastructure in mid-September. Returning power and getting food and water has been an on-going challenge since the storm, according to news reports. Agosto's family survived the storm but has intermittent communication.

"I know firsthand through hearing from friends and family members in Puerto Rico how many needs there are still to fill, even just in the town that I am from," Agosto said.

"I thought it would be easiest if we could help a town directly, so our school's donation of food will go directly to the church, where town volunteers will distribute the goods straight to members of the community."

In addition to the efforts for Puerto Rico, Ox Ridge has formed a sister school relationship with Jones Clark

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Elementary School in Beaumont, Texas.

“This school was significantly impacted by Hurricane Harvey so our fifth graders are making connections with their fifth graders to write letters, have supportive conversations and drive a collection of much needed school uniforms for kids who have lost so much,” said Forshaw.

Forshaw noted that students have taken the reins in promoting, raising funds, and leading the work with the sister school. Some students, for example, are doing chores to raise dollars to buy uniforms. Forshaw said he was proud of the school's efforts.

— *Marc Marin is district director of instructional technology. This article is republished from the Darien Public Schools News of the Week newsletter.*