



The Heart in Hand

el corazon en la mano

mayo de 2025

Herencia Musical December 2024

Hermandad again celebrated the Christmas season with “Herencia Musical a Puerto Rican Christmas music celebration.” Our performers included Catherine Fries-Sierra (Vocals and Narration), Orlando Cotto (Percussion and Vocals), Luis Rivera (Vocals), Ernesto Rivera (Percussion), and Santiago (Tito) Padilla (Keyboard and Vocals).

Audience members sang along and danced as the group played the Puerto Rican songs of the season. Puerto Rican pastries were available to take home before and after the concert, thanks to the work of Marta Padilla and her crew. Jean also sold Three Kings cards and ornaments. Funds raised helped Hermandad give more than ever during Jean and John’s annual January-February trip to Puerto Rico.



L-R: Catherine Fries-Sierra, Luis Rivera, Ernesto Rivera, Orlando Cotto, and Santiago (Tito) Padilla

Hermandad’s January Scout Troop 313 Visit

On January 18, 2025, we spent the afternoon with Scout Troop 313 in Caguas for their semi-monthly meeting. Hermandad presented a \$4,500 check to them. These funds help offset annual dues for scouts, leaders, and assistant leaders that have risen to over \$9,000. With this gift, more scouts will be able to attend summer camp.



Jean and John Knight with Scout Troop 313.

Habitat Site Visit

During Jean and John Knight's January-February Puerto Rican trip, they met with Amanda Silva and Blanchy Colón of Habitat for Humanity of Puerto Rico. The current rehab project in Caguas, PR is a ten family apartment building. Two apartments are designated for handicapped accessibility. Habitat is currently awaiting approval of city permits before they can start some of the remaining work. In the meantime, they're engaged with family applicants in the eligibility determination process. Habitat of Puerto Rico is one of the entities Hermandad supports.

Affordable housing stands as a great challenge in Puerto Rico. This past November Hermandad made their second annual donation to Habitat for Humanity of Puerto Rico. We appreciate the commitment and work of all the Habitat staff and volunteers. Hermandad celebrates Habitat's work in Caguas and throughout the island. We stand committed to supporting their vital work.

February Aleyda y sus amigos

Hermandad held its first music fundraiser in Caguas, Puerto Rico on Saturday, February 22, 2025 at Primera Iglesia Bautista de Caguas auditorium in Caguas. Eighty-seven audience members enjoyed the music of Aleyda Santos and her group "Aleyda y sus amigos." Musicians included Aleyda Santos: Vocals and Cuatro; Jesmary Ocasio Rosario: Musical Director and Cuatro; José Luis Vázquez Torres: Guitar; Félix Javier Colón Alvarado: Flute; and Daizalee M. Félix Bermúdez: Percussion.

The group performed fourteen selections including "Preciosa" by Rafael Hernández with many in the audience singing along to the traditional Puerto Rican songs.

At the close of the "Aleyda y sus amigos" performance, John Knight, Hermandad President, Jean Knight, Hermandad Secretary, and Gladys Rodriguez, Hermandad Board Member presented Aleyda, who is also president of the National Federation of the Blind of Puerto Rico, a \$2,000 check to assist four students to attend the National Federation of the Blind Annual Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana this summer.



L-R John Knight, Hermandad President; Jean Knight, Hermandad Secretary; Blanchy Colón, Housing Development Support Specialist; Amanda Silva, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Puerto Rico



L-R: Félix Javier Colón Alvarado, Aleyda Santos, Dimas López (Audio), Daizalee M. Félix Bermúdez, José Luis Vázquez Torres, and Jesmary Ocasio Rosario.



Hermandad president presents a \$2,000 check to Aleyda Santos, President-National Federation of the Blind of Puerto Rico.

Colegio Bautista De Caguas Science Students

In April, Hermandad awarded a \$1,500 check to Colegio de Bautista de Caguas. Our gift will assist two science students who will attend the International Science Fair in Columbus, Ohio from May 10-16, 2025 in Columbus

Axel Roman and Gabriela Hernández will represent Puerto Rico in the category of Environmental Engineering. Their project is Regolith Bioremediation for the Cultivation of *Medicago sativa*, which proposes the use of fungi to prepare and remove toxins from the soil and cultivate alfalfa. In the future, they wish to help farmers clean and prepare the land to grow more food in Puerto Rico.

We celebrate their achievements and are grateful we have an opportunity to help as they journey to the International Science Fair.

Advancement Committee

During our last Hermandad board meeting, we voted to create an “Advancement Committee.” We invite you to join our committee meeting via Zoom as we take new steps forward in our mission. Share your ideas as we serve Puerto Rico together. If you’re interested, contact us at info@jkhhermandadpr.org .

A Celebration of Spring: Piano and Voice Recital to be Held at Steinway Gallery in Cockeysville

Hermandad will present our second “A Celebration of Spring: Piano and Voice Recital on Sunday, May 18, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at the Steinway Gallery, 9709 York Road, Cockeysville, MD 21030. We want to remind everyone that the Steinway Gallery is now at 9709 York Road in Cockeysville. From I-83, take the Padonia Road exit.

Corporación Milagros del Amor (CorMA)

Hermandad wishes to thank the staff and volunteers at Corporación Milagros del Amor (CorMA) for their assistance during our first Puerto Rican fundraiser. They helped us make the event a great success. Hermandad sent a \$2,000 gift to CorMA upon our return from Puerto Rico. As they touch so many in need throughout the Caguas area, we feel privileged to partner with them.



L-R Gabriela Hernández and Axel Roman holding check awarded by Hermandad.



[Learn more and Donate for Tickets →](#)

A Celebration of Spring: Piano and Voice Recital

Come join Hermandad for a special performance by
David Garcia and Kathleen Hackett.

May 18, 2025
7:00 p.m.

Steinway Gallery
9709 York Rd
Cockeysville, MD 21030
[> Get directions](#)

David Garcia, Pianist

David Garcia began playing the piano at age 11. His first piano teacher was Laura Garvin with whom he studied Suzuki Book 1 and completed it in 4 months. His second piano teacher was Stephanie Oshry. During his studies with her, he received outstanding grades in piano exams. David then moved on to the Peabody Preparatory studying with Amy Killian. He has received Adult Achievement Awards from the Peabody Preparatory multiple times. David performs in the Adult Continuing Education Recitals at Peabody. Additionally, he has played the piano at nursing homes, holiday parties, weddings, and fundraisers including one benefiting Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria.

Kathleen Hackett, Vocalist

Kathleen is a second year vocal major at the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University, in the studio of Ah Young Hong. She has been performing since the age of 6, and has a passion for uplifting people through the arts. Previous credits include: *Les Misérables* (Gavroche), *A Pirates Life for Me* (Dandy), *The Screwtape Letters*, *Carousel*, *Oliver!* (The Artful Dodger), *Fiddler on the Roof* (Yenta the Matchmaker), *The King and I* (Anna Leonowens), *The Crucible* (Mary Warren), *My Fair Lady* (Mrs. Higgins), *Godspell* (Celisse), *Camelot*, *Annie* (Miss Hannigan), *The Sound of Music* (Reverend Mother), as well as participating in the St. Philomena Apostolate choir for 6 years, and the Peabody Hopkins Community choir. All glory to God!



Xin Wu, Accompanist

Dr. Xin Wu is a pianist specializing in opera, vocal coaching, and collaborative performance. She serves as an accompanist and vocal coach at Morgan State University and a staff pianist at the Peabody Conservatory and Preparatory, where she works closely with singers to prepare for recitals, competitions, and professional engagements. With extensive experience in vocal collaboration, Dr. Wu has played for numerous opera productions, and she frequently collaborates in major vocal competitions, including NATS, NATSAA, the Hong Kong International Vocal Competition, and the Met Laffont Competition. She recently released an album with The Cecilia Collective titled *The Forgotten Genius of Josephine Lang*, highlighting the work of this remarkable composer.