



# The Heart in Hand

el corazon en la mano

marzo de 2026



## “Así Suenan Puerto Rico”

Our group titled the December 2025 concert “Así Suenan Puerto Rico” (“That’s what Puerto Rico sounds like”). This concert raises funds for the Jack and Eunice Knight Memorial Fund for Puerto Rican youth. Hermandad has awarded scholarships, supported scouting efforts, and helped pay expenses for science fair winners to attend the International Science Fair through this fund.

Hermandad presented their third annual traditional Puerto Rican Christmas music concert on Saturday, December 6, 2025. Our musicians included Catherine Fries-Sierra (Vocals and Narration), Orlando Cotto (Percussion and Vocals), Ernesto Rivera (Percussion), and Santiago (Tito) Padilla (keyboard and vocals). Due to a case of laryngitis, Luis Rivera was unable to be with us this year. Tito Padilla provided vocals in his place. Hermandad is grateful for the multitalented Tito Padilla and look forward to Luis Rivera’s return in December.

## December 2025 Trip

For the first time, Jean and John visited Puerto Rico in December. Two days after our Hermandad, “Así Suenan Puerto Rico” fundraiser Jean and John boarded the plane for San Juan.

Their primary reason for going in December centered on receiving an invitation from the National Federation of the Blind of Puerto Rico to attend their annual convention in Caguas. Once on the island, Jean and John received multiple invitations including a certificate ceremony at C3Tec, a church Christmas party and a Trulla. They also presented Corporación Milagros del Amor (CorMA) with a donation of \$1,000.

At C3Tec’s certificate ceremony, we celebrated participants’ completion a two month, twice weekly, robotics and programming workshop. As part of the program, participants presented a video game they had created. First, one of their parents would attempt to play the video game. Then, the video game creator showed how to play it and win! Each participant also received a small robot at the ceremony.

Jean and John met the seven scholarship recipients ranging from age 10 to their early teens that included boys and girls. Each scholarship was valued at \$391 per person.

On Friday, Jean and John attended a Trulla sponsored by Primera Iglesia Bautista de Caguas. A Trulla is like Christmas caroling Puerto Rican style. The group visited three homes singing traditional Puerto Rican songs. At the last home, they enjoyed soup and bread as is part of the tradition. They also had an opportunity to attend some of the church's Christmas party Saturday afternoon before preparing to attend a banquet that night.

At the Annual Convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Puerto Rico, they attended meetings, workshops and Saturday's banquet. Jean and John received recognition for Hermandad's continued support for the National Federation of the Blind of Puerto Rico.



L-R: John Knight, Hermandad President; Jean Knight, Hermandad Secretary; and Aleyda Santos Matos, President of the National Federation of the Blind of Puerto Rico.

## **January to March Puerto Rico Trip 2026**

During Jean and John's annual winter visit to Puerto Rico, Hermandad gave donation gifts totaling \$16,000. These funds were drawn from both Hermandad's Memorial and General funds.

On January 13, 2026, Hermandad gave a donation to Colegio Bautista de Caguas in the amount of \$2,000 to assist with teacher continuing education. We realize schools have many needs and, at times, face challenges meeting continuing education needs.



(Tuesday, January 13, 2026) L-R: John Knight, President - Hermandad; Dr. Maria Santiago, School Administrator of the Colegio Bautista de Caguas; and Jean Knight, Secretary - Hermandad

## *January to March Continued*

Next, Jean and John Knight visited INOTEF, a non-profit organization offering psychosocial, psycho educational, and counseling services for children and families. Jean and John presented them with a first time donation in the amount of \$5,000.



(Tuesday, January 13, 2026) L-R: John Knight, President - Hermandad; Dr. Siri Colón Rivera - Treasurer from the Board of Institute of Family Guidance and Therapy, Inc. (INOTEF); and Jean Knight, Secretary - Hermandad



On Saturday, February 7, 2026, Jean and John attended a meeting with Scout Tropa 313 and presented them with a \$5,000 donation. They were impressed by the number of scouts and parents participating, their enthusiasm and their camaraderie. In one session, scouts focused



Above: Jean Knight, Secretary-Hermandad and John Knight, President-Hermandad present a \$5,000 donation to Assistant Scout Master Yadira Calderon as her daughter, scout Deborah Esther Perez Calderon, looks on. (L-R: Yadira Calderon, Deborah, Jean, and John)

Left: Jean and John with Scout Troop 313

### *Habitat for Humanity Site Visit*

Hermandad has maintained contact with Habitat for Humanity of Puerto Rico and visited the Caguas site on Thursday, February 26, 2026. Jean and John met Maria Del Mar, Strategic Impact Officer for Habitat for Humanity of Puerto Rico. She had shown them the Caguas Habitat project last February. This year, Jean and John toured the rehabilitated building now with 10 completed units and all government certifications in place. They met and talked with a happy new homeowner.

During the visit, Jean and John met another touring party which included: Carmen Smith, Vice President of U.S. Affiliate Services at Habitat for Humanity International; Larla Peña, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Puerto Rico; and Adrienne Goolsby, Senior Vice President, U.S. and Canada at Habitat for Humanity International. They knew some of Jean and John's Habitat for Humanity International contacts and enjoyed hearing some of the Hermandad story.



L-R: Carmen Smith, Vice President of U.S. Affiliate Services at Habitat for Humanity International; Larla Peña, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Puerto Rico; Adrienne Goolsby, Senior Vice President, U.S. and Canada at Habitat for Humanity International; John Knight, President – Hermandad, and Jean Knight, Secretary – Hermandad.



L-R: Maria Del Mar, Strategic Impact Officer - Habitat for Humanity of Puerto Rico; Jean Knight; and John Knight.

Photo by Maria Del Mar.

## “Aleyda y sus Amigos, Música y Hermandad”

Hermandad held their second Puerto Rican fundraiser “Aleyda y sus Amigos, Música y Hermandad” at Primera Iglesia Bautista de Caguason Saturday, February 28, 2026 in Caguas, Puerto Rico.

This year the group included: Aleyda Santos - Vocalist, Cuatro, and Producer; Jesmary Ocasio Rosario - Musical Director and Cuatro; José Luis Vázquez Torres - Guitar; Félix Javier Colón Alvarado - Flute, and Isander Y. Marin - Percussion. Their joyful performance of traditional music inspired and engaged the audience.

At the close of the program, Jean and John presented Aleyda, president of the National Federation of the Blind of Puerto Rico, with a bouquet of flowers and a \$3,000 donation.

They also surprised Gladys Rodriguez, Executive Director of Corporación Milagros del Amor (CorMA) with two gifts. CorMA received the first gift of \$1,000 from Hermandad’s new “Reverend John & Mrs. Jean Knight Endowment Fund for Puerto Rico.” John and Jean designed this to be an active endowment where Hermandad builds and uses funds simultaneously. With this gift for the people of Puerto Rico, they hope Hermandad’s work will continue long after they are gone. Then, John and Jean also presented Gladys with a check to CorMA in the amount of \$2,000.

We want to thank the many volunteers who helped with this event including our Puerto Rico based board members Gladys Rodriguez, Reverend Adlin Quiles, and Cynthia Lopez. Having these contacts in Puerto Rico helps Hermandad work toward our mission and vision more effectively.

Even if you could not attend our event in person, you can watch our professional video with a donation of any amount. Hermandad thanks Juan Aguayo-Leal of Caguas for this very generous donation of his time and talents.



L-R: José Luis Vázquez Torres; Jesmary Ocasio Rosario; Aleyda Santos; Félix Javier Colón Alvarado; Isander Y. Marin; John and Jean Knight.

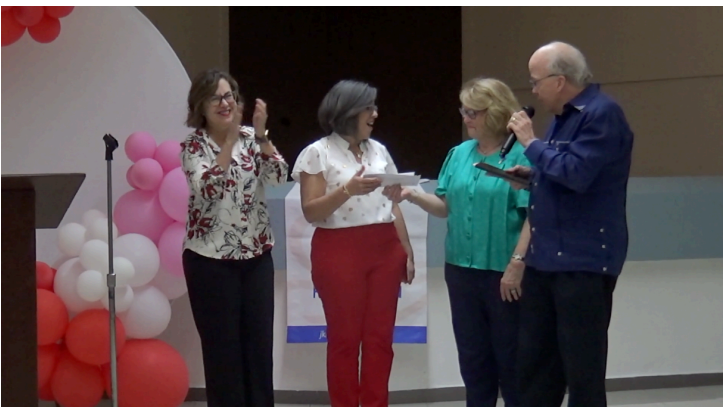




L-R: Reverend Adlin Quiles; Reverend John Knight; Aleyda Santos; and Jean Knight presenting flowers to Aleyda following the performance.



L-R: Reverend Adlin Quiles; Reverend John Knight; Aleyda Santos, President - National Federation of the Blind of Puerto Rico; and Jean Knight presenting a donation of \$3,000.



L-R: Reverend Adlin Quiles; Gladys Rodriguez, Executive Director of Corporación Milagros del Amor (CorMA); Jean and John present donations from Hermandad's Endowment Fund and Hermandad.

Special thanks to Adlin for translation during the program.

**Mark your calendar for Hermandad's Third  
"A Celebration of Spring" Recital Fundraiser**

**Sunday, May 17, 2026 4:00pm**

**Steinway Gallery**

**Hunt Valley, Maryland**

*Watch for notifications in Hermandad emails, on our website and Facebook page.*



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. This year David introduced Hermandad to pianist Joseph Bowens who will be our third performer in our "A Celebration of Spring" Recital.

Vocalist Kathleen Hackett is a third 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.

Pianist Joseph Bowens trained at Peabody Preparatory under the guidance of Dr. Hyun-Sook Park and later expanded into jazz studies with Blake Meister.

Continuing his artistic growth, Joseph studied privately in New York City with Grammy-nominated jazz pianist Eldar Djangirov, an experience that profoundly influenced his musical perspective and performance approach.

As a composer and producer, he enjoys exploring and blending a wide range of genres, including jazz, classical, lo-fi, hip-hop, soul, and progressive rock. "My work reflects a passion for musical versatility, expressive storytelling, and pushing creative boundaries across styles."

We look forward to Joseph's addition to "A Celebration of Spring" recital.

## **More Information About Each Hermandad Fund**

In June, Hermandad president John Knight will be in Puerto Rico recording three sermons. Each sermon will focus on one of our three Hermandad funds: the General Fund, the Jack and Eunice Knight Memorial Fund for Puerto Rican Youth, and the Reverend John & Mrs. Jean Knight Endowment Fund for Puerto Rico.

The sermons will explain the faith concepts behind the creation of each fund. Hermandad will have them published on Hermandad's online platforms when production is completed.

### **The Reverend John & Mrs. Jean Knight Endowment Fund for Puerto Rico**

In December 2025, Hermandad's president and secretary, John and Jean Knight created the "Reverend John and Mrs. Jean Knight Endowment Fund for Puerto Rico" to further the work of Hermandad for many years to come.

The American Baptist Foundation will manage the endowment. Jean and John donated \$25,000 to begin the endowment. As retired American Baptist clergy, John has been aware of the Foundation's work for many years. This fund will both help others now and as it grows to help with future needs. This fund has already attracted donors based on Hermandad's giving history, mission and vision for the people of Puerto Rico.

**Follow the links for more information and donate today!**

**Spanish**

**English**