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## Local Puerto Rican families rally to aid family members hit by Hurricane Maria

by Fred Cantu  
Monday, September 25th 2017



PHOTO: Diggers and small boats are being used to help people trapped in their houses due to the flooding in Loíza, Puerto Rico, Photo Date: 9/21/2017 (Photo: FEMA / MGN Online)

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# Local Puerto Rican families rally to aid family members hit by Hurricane Maria

*Fred Cantu*

Puerto Rico's governor is calling for a rapid influx of aid to prevent what he calls a humanitarian crisis following Hurricane Maria. And that call is being heard here in Central Texas by families with Puerto Rican roots.

The horrors of Hurricane Maria are still evident all across the Caribbean island of Puerto Rico. And they can look especially bad when you have loved ones there. Melanie Lopez says, "It's devastating, heartbreaking, sad to see. And it's just like here at home in Houston. Only thing is we can't drive over there."

Lopez has an uncle near the island's capital. And she's been told he may be in the dark for awhile. "As of now there is no electricity where my uncle is staying in Bayamon in Puerto Rico," she says adding, "And they are expecting it to be out for about six months."

But for her uncle, electricity is not a luxury, it's a medical necessity. Lopez explains, "He's in his 90s and he needs an oxygen tank in order to breathe, his medications, some of them need to be in the fridge, stuff like that. So without electricity it's a struggle for him right now."

Lopez's family hopes to get him away from all that and on a plane to the mainland. Meanwhile she and her friends are spreading the word about local efforts to help the other hurricane victims.

[Chago's Caribbean Cuisine](#) restaurant on North Lamar is posting on it's Facebook page that it's collecting for hurricane relief. And Lopez's friends are working with Austin's [Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance and Cultural Center](#).