



PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ESAI MORALES, ZULEYKA RIVERA, ISMAEL MIRANDA AND DAVID BEGNAUD TO LEAD THE PROCESSION OF THE 2018 NATIONAL PUERTO RICAN DAY PARADE

Springfield and Holyoke, Massachusetts to be the honored Stateside Community, with special tributes to traditional Puerto Rican music and the heroes that responded to the devastation of Hurricane María

Thursday, May 24, New York, NY – The National Puerto Rican Day Parade (NPRDP) Board of Directors announced additional themes and tributes that will make up its 2018 celebration. Under the theme, “One People, Many Voices,” the Parade will continue celebrating the best of Puerto Rican culture and music while paying tribute to the heroes that contributed to the recovery, rebuilding and renewal efforts since Hurricane Maria. The Parade also announced several distinguished Puerto Ricans that will round out its roster of honorees to march up Fifth Avenue on June 10.

“This year’s Parade has particularly profound meaning as we continue to celebrate the best of who we are as community while also providing a platform to continue to discuss the ongoing recovery, rebuilding and renewal efforts in Puerto Rico,” said Louis Maldonado, NPRDP Board Chair. “This year’s themes and honorees will highlight our rich culture and our community’s contributions to global society while paying tribute to the countless individuals that acted in heroic ways in response to Hurricane Maria.”

This 2018 National Puerto Rican Day Parade will be led by the award-winning actor, Esaí Morales, who will serve as **Grand Marshal**. Born in Brooklyn, Morales’ screen credits include roles in films like “La Bamba” and “My Family/Mi Familia”, as well as television series like “Chicago PD,” “Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders” and “Ozark.” Over his 35-year career, Morales has sought to challenge the stereotypical portrayal of Latinos in television and film, and he now serves on the national board for SAG-AFTRA.

Other distinguished honorees include several individuals who are leaders in multiple fields. Former Miss Universe, television host, dancer and model, Zuleyka Rivera, will be this year’s Parade **Queen**. Legendary singer/songwriter and former member of the world-renowned Fania All Stars, Ismael Miranda, will be recognized with a **Lifetime Achievement** title. Other leading honorees announced at a press conference in San Juan include noted singer Lucecita Benítez with a **Lifetime Achievement** title, Laura and Jorge Posada as **Madrina and Padrino** (Godmother and Godfather) and Carlos Beltrán as **Athlete of the Year**.

Honoring Heroes in the Aftermath of Maria

This year's honorees will also include first responders and other local heroes who have demonstrated unwavering commitment to providing emergency aid and ongoing recovery relief to Puerto Rico in the wake of the devastation caused by Hurricane Maria. These individuals and organizations have demonstrated an extraordinary degree of dedication to helping the people of Puerto Rico, while also helping to raise awareness about the humanitarian crisis that still evolving on the island.

"Over the past 8 months, we witnessed countless first responders, community organizations and everyday good samaritans act in remarkable ways to help provide humanitarian aid," said Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez, NPRDP Board Member. "This year, we will honor many of the heroes in the ongoing recovery, rebuilding and renewal effort."

The NPRDP Board will recognize David Begnaud, CBS News Correspondent, for his extraordinary, award-winning reporting of Hurricane Maria and for documenting the recovery efforts and progress made over the past 8 months. He will receive the special title of **Campeón Puertorriqueño** (Puerto Rican Champion). His reporting helped provide a voice to the people of Puerto Rico and served to help keep the more than 5+ million Puerto Ricans living in the continental United States informed about the situation on the ground. The NPRDP received countless messages via its social media platforms to honor Begnaud in this year's Parade, and the Board of Directors is thrilled to recognize him in this year's celebration.

The NPRDP would also like to recognize and express its deepest gratitude to several organizations and individuals that were among the first responders in providing emergency relief and have continued to provide ongoing humanitarian aid to families in Puerto Rico, as well as those displaced hurricane survivors who have moved to the U.S. mainland, the NPRDP Board will also honor t and are now displaced. The following organizations will be honored with the title of **Héroes**: Hispanic Federation, Comité Noviembre, Catholic Charities, Proyecto Enlace del Caño Martín Peña, Fundación Súper Héroes and Chicas by Alejandra.

The situation in Puerto Rico is still quite dire, with thousands of families living without electricity, clean water and many other basic necessities. For many, access to education and medical service is far from adequate, creating a humanitarian crisis that will require a long-term rebuilding and renewal effort. Other families that have fled Puerto Rico are still without affordable housing and employment. The NPRDP honors these organizations to promote their great work, help drive awareness and keep the conversation related to Puerto Rico in the mainstream dialogue; while leveraging their infrastructure and capacity to continue addressing the humanitarian crisis.

Springfield and Holyoke, Massachusetts is 2018 Honored Stateside Community

Every year, the NPRDP Board of Directors recognizes a Puerto Rican community in the continental United States that has played an integral role in the collective history of the Puerto Rican diaspora. This year's honored Stateside Community is comprised of the adjoining cities, Springfield and Holyoke, Massachusetts. First formed in the early migrations of Puerto Ricans to the mainland in the late-1940s and 1950s, their collective populations have now grown to approximately 70,000 Puerto Ricans, and they have become vital contributors to the local economy through the formation of small businesses, by providing a skilled labor force and through civil service as elected and appointed officials in local government, city councils and school committees.

Special Tribute to Traditional Puerto Rican Music

The Parade will pay special tribute to Puerto Rico's national instrument, *el cuatro*, recognizing its historical and cultural significance in shaping Puerto Rico's traditional music. The Puerto Rican *cuatro* is a small, guitar-like instrument with 10 strings. As part of this tribute, the Parade is recognizing several accomplished *cuatro* players that are actively preserving this national treasure and, as such, are underscoring the importance of its role in traditional Puerto Rican music. In doing so, the Parade honors two legendary *cuatro* players, Pedrito Guzmán and Iluminado Dávila, as **Lifetime Achievement** honorees. The Parade also recognizes several members of the new generation of virtuoso performers and teachers with a special recognition. These include Manny Trinidad, Maribel Delgado, Cristian Nieves, Fabiola Méndez and Luis Sanz. Additionally, the Parade will honor the accomplished singer of Puerto Rican folkloric music, Victoria Sanabria, with the title, **Orgullo Puertorriqueño**.

Education Leadership Awards and Scholarship Program

Every year, at the Education Leadership Awards, the NPRDP honors four distinguished individuals that have dedicated their careers to advancing the educational attainment in the Puerto Rican community. This year's Education Leadership honorees include:

- **Dra. Aida Díaz:** President, *Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico* (Puerto Rican Teachers Association)
- **Ileana Cintrón Aguilú:** Chief of Family and Community Engagement, Holyoke Public Schools
- **Marvin Garcia:** Chairperson for "Community as a Campus," Humboldt Park, Chicago, IL
- **Iris DeLutro:** Program Manager, Murphy Institute Leap-to Teacher Program, City University of New York's School of Labor and Urban Studies
- **Miriam Quiles (Teacher of the Year):** NYC Public School Teacher, teaching ESOL at P.S. 160

For a second consecutive year, the Parade will award 100 scholarships to exceptional high school seniors and college freshmen, sophomores and juniors of Puerto Rican descent. Each scholarship is in the amount of \$2,000 for a total pool of \$200,000, a 20-fold increase since 2013. This year's applicants represent over 19 states and Puerto Rico. Scholarship recipients will be announced at the Education Leadership Awards on May 24th in New York City. For the complete list of 2018 Scholarship Awards recipients, visit www.nprdpinc.org.

Additional Honorees for 2018

In addition to the honorees mentioned above, the NPRDP is proud to announce the following individuals that will also be honored in the 2018 celebration:

- Richard "Crazy Legs: Colón: Hip Hop artist, B-Boy and philanthropist
- Tats Cru (Wilfredo "Bio" Feliciano, BG 183 and Hector "Nicer" Nazario): Bronx-based graffiti artists and professional muralists
- Virginia Sánchez Korrol, PhD: Educator, historian and novelist, specializing in Puerto Rican studies
- Sunny Hostin: Attorney, Emmy-Award winning journalist and co-host of ABC's "The View"
- Jackie Guerrido: Television personality, journalist and co-anchor of Univision's "Primer Impacto"
- Michael Stuart: Salsa singer, actor and television host
- Julio "Gaby" Acevedo: Reporter for NBC4 and Telemundo 47/WNJU
- Allan Villafaña: co-anchor for "Primera Edición" and host of "Enfoque", Telemundo 47/WNJU
- Ricardo Villarini: Reporter for Telemundo 47/WNJU
- Johnny Bliss: singer and contest on NBC's "The Voice"

In late April, the Parade's Board of Directors announced its first group of honorees for 2018. These honorees included:

- Ambassador – Naíz: singer, songwriter and composer of the hit song, "Isla bendita"
- Rising Star – Sebastián Rosado: motivational speaker, college student and champion for the differently-abled community
- Rising Star – Christopher Rivera: singer and 2016 winner of Telemundo's "La Voz Kids"

During the Annual Mass at Saint Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue in New York, scheduled for June 3, the NPRDP will give a special posthumous recognition to the following distinguished Puerto Ricans who have passed in the last year:

- Shorty Castro (1928-2018): Comedian, writer, singer, dancer and stage director
- Baltasar Corrado del Rio (1935-2018): Born in Morovis, politician and former mayor of San Juan
- Billy Fourquet (1961-2018): Veteran radio personality
- Elías López (1945-2017): Trumpet player, composer, arranger, music producer and director
- "Pijuán" José Juan Piñero González (1942-2018): Pianist, composer and television producer
- Tavín Pumarejo (1934-2016): Comedian and singer of traditional Puerto Rican music
- Lisa Quiroz (1961-2018): Magazine publisher, community leader and philanthropist
- Victor Edwin "Cano" Rodríguez (unknown-2017): Trumpet player for El Gran Combo
- Mercedes Sicardó (1927-2917): Accomplished actress
- Vicente Villafaña de Jesús (1924-2018): Merchant marine and father of 8 children

This year's posthumous honorees will include the nine airmen that served in the Puerto Rico National Guard, who were killed in a plane crash in Georgia on May 2. Among them include:

- Maj. José R. Román Rosado - Pilot: 18 years of service, from Manati, PR
- Maj. Carlos Pérez Serra - Navigator: 23 years of service, from Canóvanas, PR
- 1st Lt. David Albandoz - Co-Pilot: 16 years of service, from PR, residing in Madison, Alabama
- Senior Master Sgt. Jan Paravisini: Mechanic - 21 years of service, from Canóvanas, PR
- Master Sgt. Jean Audriffred: 16 years of service, from Carolina, PR
- Master Sgt. Mario Braña: Flight Engineer - 17 years of service, from Bayamón, PR
- Master Sgt. Víctor Colón: 22 years of service, from Santa Isabel, PR
- Master Sgt. Eric Circuns: Loadmaster - 31 years of service, from Rio Grande, PR
- Senior Airman Roberto Espada: 3 years of service, from Salinas, PR

Finally, the June 3rd Mass at Saint Patrick's Cathedral will be dedicated to the thousands of individuals that lost their lives as a result of the destruction and devastation caused by Hurricane Maria.

The 61st Annual National Puerto Rican Day Parade will be held on New York City's Fifth Avenue from 44th Street to 79th Street, on Sunday, June 10, starting at 11:00 am (EST). The event will be aired live via WABC-TV, Channel 7 in New York. Live streaming on the Internet will be available at www.abc7ny.com.

2018 NATIONAL PUERTO RICAN DAY PARADE: CALENDAR OF REMAINING EVENTS

- Education Leadership Awards and Scholarship Presentation – May 24
- 152nd Street Cultural Festival – May 26
- Mass at Saint Patrick's Cathedral – June 3
- Gala Fundraiser – June 8
- National Puerto Rican Day Parade – June 10

###