



Waves Ahead Corp.

1149 Ave Americo Miranda, San Juan, PR 00921

*“I felt lonely, and with anxiety during the pandemic. I saw a poster of **Expresate** in my local pharmacy and I called. Since then, Waves Ahead and their clinical staff have provided me so much from the safety of my home. I feel connected to others. I participate of yoga and meditation, watch films, participate of the support groups and individual counseling, nutrition consultations, and so much. They even provided me boxes of food. I just started to grow my own small garden with vegetables and fruits. I’m looking forward and hope to visit the Center, once this pandemic is under control.”*

*Aida, 68 years old.*

Dear Waves Ahead Supporter,

It's that time of the year again. Soon, your mailbox (and inbox!) will be flooded with appeals for end-of-year donations. Here at Waves Ahead, we're no different. This is a critical time for raising funds for our work, and that's why I'm writing to you today. I hope that if I can tell you about the life-saving projects we've done this year, you'll be inspired to choose us when you decide who you'll support.

While 2020 brought unprecedented challenges to our community because of the Covid-19 pandemic, Waves Ahead was able to continue work that we'd started and even expand our efforts to meet emerging needs. And in 2021, we built on this work, serving more people than ever before.

Here are just a few of our tremendous accomplishments in 2021:

- **Critical Mental Health Services:** We've continued to increase the availability of mental health services and ancillary services, such as yoga and meditation, mindfulness groups, music-therapy, creative arts, and nutrition counseling, to a dramatically underserved population. The economic instability, impact of hurricanes and earthquakes, COVID, and the high incidence of migration to the states, have left an older adult with extreme anxiety, depression, and in despair. Our **EXPRESATE Mental Health Campaign** was developed in collaboration with SAGE NYC and the NYC Department of Aging to address the high incidence of suicide attempts and deaths by suicide by LGBT+ older Puerto Ricans in NYC and in Puerto Rico. And in 2021, we expanded our Community Centers, opening Waves Ahead's third community center for LGBT+ older adults in the town of Maunabo, a seaside southeastern town ravaged by Hurricane Maria.
- **Online support and care:** We've seen exponential growth of our online services, with 274 individuals seeking and receiving help this year. And as we continue to battle the mental health devastation that Covid creates, we've helped an additional 381+ people. Many of these individuals would not have had access to any care – and certainly not LGBTQ-responsive care –

[www.wavesahead.org](http://www.wavesahead.org) – 787.940.8851 – [waves@wavesahead.org](mailto:waves@wavesahead.org)

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had we not been able to deliver these services. And as we start returning to in-person interactions, we're delivering support via hybrid format, with some services in person and others on-line.

- **Emergency services:** In 2021, we provided aid to over 920 community members in the southwest towns, regardless of sexual orientation and/or gender identity. These resources included food, mental health services, and medication support (in the form of financial assistance and grants for medication), thanks to a collaboration with American Red Cross, P.R. Chapter.
- **SORAYA's Shelter:** This transitional shelter program, named for Soraya Santiago, a trailblazing trans woman from Puerto Rico and a board member who passed away in September 2020, will serve LGBTQ+ community members regardless of age. The shelter will provide mental health services and case management in the island's Southwest area. We are currently finalizing the acquisition of a building in Cabo Rojo that the municipality has provided for the shelter. While this shelter is currently only available during emergencies, after Waves Ahead completes work, it will be open to the community throughout the year 24/7.
- **Descubrete!:** The LGBT, Seniors, and Women-Lead Households Entrepreneurship and Training Program helped 12 individuals launch their efforts during the pandemic. These include small businesses and community non-for-profit entities that aim to create self-sustainability for LGBTQ+ and older community members. Additionally, we launched a web-based store, La Tiendita Descubrete, to promote their products and services.
- **Proyecto Chrysalis:** This trans-focused initiative provides mental health and peer support services to the local trans community. This year we expanded by adding a subsidiary of Arianna's Center. These are trans-lead efforts helping one of the most underserved communities of the island. It provides case management, mental health services, financial aid, and activities to underserved and street-bound individuals of all ages across the whole island.

*"I'm thankful to have access to the staff of Waves Ahead & SAGE Puerto Rico. At the beginning of the pandemic, I was so scared to be alone and isolated. I found a refuge and friendships with others in their services on-line. It is fun to see others, like me, doing Yoga, music-therapy and attend special events. I learned so much with their on-line workshops. They have made this quarantine feel better; sometimes, I felt they were here at home with me."*

*Doug, 64*



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Waves Ahead is saving and rebuilding the lives of people in Puerto Rico. Your financial support for Waves Ahead will ensure that all of these programs remain open and support our LGBTTQ+ loved ones. Your donations mean that we can provide more mental health services to so many on our island who are suffering alone. The contributions you make can mean rebuilding the life of someone facing tremendous loss and isolation.

Supporting Waves Ahead is simple, and we have options for everyone, from one-time donations to becoming a member of our donation circles:

- ***Taino/a:*** A one-time donation between \$75 - \$100
- ***Cacique:*** A one-time donation of \$101 - \$390
- ***Jibaro/a:*** A one-time donation of \$400 - \$1,000
- ***Vejigante:*** A one-time donation of \$1,100 and beyond

***Monthly Giving Circles:***

- ***Circulo Cotorra Boricua:*** A reoccurring monthly gift of \$25-\$75 per month. This Circle supports our continued efforts for services for LGBTQ+ older adults. This monthly donation program provides the organization with the ability to purchase materials and associated expenses with providing food boxes and materials to grow nutritious home gardens.
- ***Circulo COQUI:*** A reoccurring monthly gift of \$76 or more per month. The COQUI Circle helps sustain our daily programming by helping maintain our mental health services (in-person, online or over the phone), and transitional housing support.



**Waves Ahead is the leading organization in Puerto Rico providing these services. But we can't do it without your continued support, each dollar impacts the lives of hundreds of community members**

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affected by hurricanes, earthquakes, COVID-pandemia and economic unrest. 2021 has continued to generate enormous challenges for our community, but Waves Ahead has been there at every moment, evolving to overcome these challenges and build the resources needed to help people thrive. In 2022, we hope that an improvement in pandemic conditions will allow us to begin hosting more in-person events, but until that time, we'll continue meeting people where they are and serving their most critical needs. I look forward to your partnership as we do this work together!

With my gratitude and very best wishes,

Wilfred W. Labiosa, PhD

Executive Director