

Steven Mitchell Lundi

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I have recently returned from Puerto Rico as a selected participant in Governor Andrew Cuomo's, NY Stands with Puerto Rico Recovery and Rebuilding Initiative where I volunteered for non-profit organizations UNICEF and NECHAMA to build homes and serve in other facets of the restoration efforts. As a Haitian-American, I understand the plight of having your homeland devastated by natural disaster. The 2010 earthquake in Haiti collapsed entire cities and stole countless lives. I know tragedies like this can have long-standing ramifications on the infrastructure and livelihoods of the citizens for years to come. I genuinely empathize with the people of Puerto Rico and felt compelled to lend my efforts to this cause. On the island, I worked on the homes of three wonderful homeowners, and aside from learning how to build roofs and cement ceilings, I also learned a great deal about the amazing culture and history of Puerto Rico.

Concurrently, I was enrolled in SUNY Old Westbury's Community and Global Citizenship course where I worked on assignments designed to critically analyze and reflect on social issues and concepts such as power and privilege, intercultural understanding, and ethics. From this course, I developed a deeper appreciation for global politics and gained insight on the many socioeconomic problems which have plagued Puerto Rico throughout the years, as well as about the disaster capitalism the island now faces. Overall the entirety of this program has been an unforgettable experience that has undoubtedly heightened my interest in my global community.