



## AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CRIME LABORATORY DIRECTORS, INC.

65 Glen Road, Suite 123, Garner, NC 27529

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January 14, 2019

### ASCLD President Press Statement at Puerto Rico Press Conference

My name is Matthew Gamette and I am the Forensic Laboratory System Director for the State of Idaho. I currently oversee three forensic science laboratories and have worked in private and public labs in several states during my career. I am currently the President of the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD). We have a membership of 600 forensic science laboratory directors, and leaders from all over the United States, including here in Puerto Rico. We have members from nearly every federal, state, and local forensic science laboratory in the United States.

This week at the Puerto Rico forensic laboratory and medical examiner's office we have brought with us 12 forensic scientists, 8 anthropologists, and the majority of the ASCLD Board which held a Board meeting here in Puerto Rico over the weekend. These individuals come from all over the country. They represent the best laboratory systems in the country, with the best knowledge of the science and technology used in forensic science. This team of scientists and IT and instrumental experts are eager to provide their talents, expertise, and time to help our esteemed fellow scientists, doctors, and colleagues at NCF. This last weekend, ASCLD expert instructors came to Puerto Rico and spent three full days teaching 30 NCF leaders in the world renowned ASCLD Leadership Academy. NCF staff learned important leadership skills and developed new tools. There are currently dozens of other scientists from the continental United States that have already started and will continue to work with NCF over phone and internet connections to provide technical assistance.

There are many ways that ASCLD members are uniquely poised to help NCF address leadership needs, increase the number of cases they can work each month, address fiscal and personnel concerns, provide technical assistance, and solve infrastructure problems. We have already started, and will continue to work side by side with the NCF scientific and leadership teams to identify and obtain needed resources, solve technical issues, and ensure that robust scientific methodology continues to be practiced. I just left the laboratory where experts in each forensic science discipline have been partnered with scientists from NCF to look for ways to increase capacity and efficiency while maintaining quality. This week there will be 8 anthropologists working Puerto Rico cases, experts implementing new software tools and instruments, and several of us will be meeting with Puerto

## Puerto Rico Press Statement

Rico and federal government officials to further expedite hurricane recovery efforts. The scientists coming to Puerto Rico are volunteering their time or their employers are donating their time to help in this amazing effort. It is remarkable and inspiring.

This is our third visit to this beautiful island over the last few months. We have met your amazing scientists and doctors working at NCF. They are well educated, well trained, and most importantly they have a powerful and resilient spirit that defines Puerto Rico. Every laboratory and medical examiner office in the United States needs resources to be effective. We hope that this unique partnership will lead to private and public resources being dedicated to this important initiative. We are already working to bring other resources and organizations to the island. We are well aware of the challenges they face at NCF and are working on solutions. I want to thank the Governor, Director Pesquera, and the NCF staff for allowing us this opportunity. Many people have asked us why we are willing to come and help in Puerto Rico. First, we care immensely for our amazing colleagues at NCF that need and deserve our support, but most importantly, we are family. While many of our members are either Puerto Rican themselves or by marriage, we consider you all our family. You have wrapped your arms around us and taken us in and let us grieve with you. Now we wrap our arms around you as we look for solutions to difficult problems together. I look forward with great optimism and excitement. ASCLD is proud to partner with NAAG and the Puerto Rico Department of Public Safety on this important initiative to fortify the criminal justice system in Puerto Rico.