



## Light and Hope for Puerto Rico

Salvador Gómez-Colón, Light and Hope for Puerto Rico, Puerto Rico

### ☀ Call to Action

**Adopt renewable energy in your home. Learn about solar power. And follow Salvador on Twitter:**

**@sgomezcolon**

### ☀ Values

- Altruistic
- Generous
- Creative
- Dedicated
- Environmentalist
- Philanthropist

### ☀ Lessons Learned

**When bad things happen in your community, figure out a way you can help others.**

**Young people can become heroes for their communities.**

**Solving an immediate, local problem can lead to finding solutions for long-term, global problems.**

**Just one person with a good idea, and the willingness to carry it out, can end up helping thousands of others.**

**At the age of 15, Salvador Gabriel Gomez Colon lived through the most traumatic night of his life when Hurricane Maria hit his home in Puerto Rico.**

The hurricane would change his life forever and set him on an unexpected journey. After the storm, Salvador founded Light and Hope for Puerto Rico, a fundraiser to provide solar lamps and hand-powered washing machines to people who lost power during Maria. He raised more than \$160,000—enough to provide 3,500 households in 17 towns across the island with supplies. His activism landed him on stage at the Davos World Economic Forum in Switzerland, where he sounded out a powerful call to world leaders to take action to combat climate change.

### ☀ Language Arts

**Using Salvador's story as an example, write a one-page essay** arguing in favor of providing solar-powered lamps, batteries, and chargers to cities and towns.

**Imagine there is a natural disaster in your area that causes 90 percent of the people to lose power.** You decide to start a petition asking people to donate money in order to buy solar lamps, heaters, chargers, etc. Write a GoFundMe-style pitch to convince people to donate to your cause.

**Write a (fake) Twitter exchange with a person who doesn't believe in the importance of giving people access to solar power.** The exchange must have a total of ten tweets (five for and five against solar power). You will need to present, build, and defend your thesis to the imaginary person arguing with you.

## STEM Activities

**Salvador helped raise money to give Puerto Ricans solar lamps and hand-powered washing machines, and researched other sustainable alternatives for appliances we take for granted on a daily basis.** List three of the sustainable appliances you've found, and think about how you might integrate them into your life.

**The dated power grid supplying Puerto Ricans with their electricity was rendered useless during Hurricane Maria.** Think of some ways you would protect powerlines and generators from destruction during a natural disaster. Then, learn how power grids are fortified in real life. How do your ideas compare to what is really used? Do you think your ideas could improve what exists?

**Solar power is essentially free unlimited energy.** Can you think of some of the reasons people would be hesitant to adopt this technology?

## Sustainability Innovations

**Team [RubiconUSA.org](http://RubiconUSA.org)<sup>1</sup> was founded in the wake of the 2010 Haiti earthquake.** This organization has worked with military veterans, first responders, medical professionals and trained civilians to assist in 650 disaster relief programs over the past 10 years.

**All Hands and Hearts - Disaster relief foundation founded in 2004 after the effects brought on by the Great Indian Ocean Tsunami.** They have numerous volunteer opportunities, including in the Bahamas, Louisiana, Florida, Texas, Los Angeles, Mexico, Peru, Nepal, and Australia.

**Research disasters that the world has experienced in the last four years.**

- Identify 2-3 relief programs that have assisted in these disasters, and explain why you would like to assist with that program in the future.

## Sustainability Career Pathways

**Community Organizer.** Engaging one's community around important environmental and social challenges, as well as in post-disaster situations, is an important career path and opportunity for community service. There are many programs to learn organizing skills, from online courses, to one-year environmental organizing field schools like [Green Corps](#)<sup>2</sup>.

**Fundraiser/Development Officer. Raising money is a skill as well as a viable career path.** Every major nonprofit organization has a development officer—from environmental organizations to universities and community aid organizations. For a basic description on what being a development officer entails, [visit here](#)<sup>3</sup>.

**Development and Marketing of Sustainable Technology:** Companies like “The Laundry Alternative” can fill a large niche in an economy where electricity is limited. As communities around the world seek to reduce electricity usage in order to limit greenhouse gas emissions, appliances that are human, or even bicycle-powered may be a significant growth market. Inventing, designing, raising capital for, marketing, and distributing are all essential roles (and jobs!) for creating and distributing sustainable technologies.

**Social Marketer.** In addition to working for a specific company marketing its product(s), marketing brand managers can play a powerful role in drawing attention to sustainable products and services and getting people to use them. From convincing people to put solar

panels on their rooftops to getting them to eat sustainable food products, or getting them to use public transportation bicycle, the field of “social marketing” is marketing in service of achieving social goods, rather than just stimulating more consumption of unsustainable products. [Learn more about this field here](#)<sup>4</sup>.

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1 <https://teamrubiconusa.org/volunteer/>

2 <https://greencorps.org/>

3 <https://www.ziprecruiter.com/Career/Development-Officer/What-Is-How-to-Become#:~:text=Your%20responsibilities%20revolve%20around%20building,finding%20volunteers%20for%20various%20projects>

4 <https://www.simplilearn.com/what-does-a-social-media-marketer-do-article>

