

Puente de Amigos Annual Report 2025

It has been a busy year for the Puente de Amigos Committee. Since Sessions 2024, three delegations have gone to Cuba to visit their sister meetings. In October 2024 a group from Hanover Meeting visited Havana. In February a joint delegation from Dover, Portland, and Durham visited Holguin and Velasco. They also attended Cuba Yearly Meeting in Gibara. In April a group from Framingham and Wellesley visited Puerto Padre and Delicias. These trips have introduced new people from New England to our Friends in Cuba and enlivened the personal connection we have with our Cuban Friends. Each trip delivered desperately needed cash and supplies. All fourteen Quaker churches in Cuba now have solar panels mostly delivered by New England Friends. These allow Cuban Friends to manage better with the daily electrical blackouts. The groups also supplied essential medical supplies and over the counter medications.

Cuba has lately been experiencing a dire economic situation. There has been 300% inflation in the last few years, and wages and pensions have not kept pace. As a consequence, Cubans generally cannot purchase enough food or fuel unless they have a side business or family in the US who send money. We observed countless small businesses on people's front steps, and in a park in Holguin. The government has come to rely on these small businesses to supply items it cannot provide. The effect has been an increase in economic inequality. At a meeting with Jorge Luis Peña during the April visit, he shared with us information about this socio-economic and political context and how it affects the church which makes ever more important the relationship between our two yearly meetings. For more detail on this, please see the [Report of Spring 2025 Delegation.docx](#)

Puente's mission is to enrich each other in spiritual friendship. This was easier when Cubans could visit us. Since 2017 no Cubans have been able to travel to the US; the personal connection relies on visits from the US. We cannot be good friends and ignore the dire economic circumstances in Cuba; they rely on us for funds to improve their decaying buildings and to supply items such as solar panels. We have wealth, and as good friends, we share it.

Technology has made it possible to connect in real time. We chat with each other on WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger. We have provided Cuba Yearly Meeting with a VPN connection so that our Cuban Friends can join those in New England on Zoom. There are thoughts about

having a shared reading group between meetings and possibly sharing our worship together through Zoom. These are some of the ways we can keep the Bridge alive.

Presently, we await Kirenia Criado's visit to New England to deliver the Bible Half Hours at Sessions. It is our and Cuba Yearly Meeting's hope that her visit will further enliven our connection.