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Assisting others is natural and an everyday occurrence for educators. So when our fellow citizens of Puerto Rico were so severely impacted last fall by hurricanes Irma and Maria, several local school superintendents began organizing an effort to assist schools in need. In June, local educational leaders traveled to Puerto Rico to work directly with school and community leaders to improve the elementary school Rafael de Jesus.

Area Superintendents Jay Marino, Antioch Elementary School District 34; Jason Lind, Milburn School District 24; and Jim McKay, Community High School District 117; along with Lakes Community High School Principal Dave Newberry and Antioch Community High School Principal Eric Hamilton, began raising money through civic organizations such as Rotary and through corporate sponsorships. Money was raised to help repair the damaged school and improve the learning environment. The Kindergarten through fifth grade elementary school is located in Rio Grande, Puerto Rico on the northeast side of the island.

The effort became known as “Relief Through Leadership” because of the collaborative and creative problem solving necessary to help the education community of Rafael de Jesus. Along with raising money, collecting school supplies and transporting technology, a week-long relief effort in Puerto Rico brought a team of educational leaders together for a common cause … kids!