Amizade and Caras (Puerto Rico) | CBR Fellows Proposal

1. **Site:** San Juan, PR

2. **Description of partner:**
   Amizade has been partnering in Puerto Rico since 2012, and with Caras since 2014. Caras is a San Juan-based nonprofit organization that drives community development to eradicate poverty through community participation, education, and environmental integration in Puerto Rico. Caras has historically focused on two main projects that engage (1) mangrove restoration and (2) after school education in several poor communities around Cantano and Guayanabo.

   In preparation for Hurricane Maria, Caras created a project called ConnectRelief, which helped to ensure the safety and security of many residences in the areas that they work. Their fast thinking and hard work got the attention of a lot of people, and even led to a compelling interview on NPR's *Weekend Edition*. In Hurricane Maria's aftermath, Caras is now focusing on rebuilding its mangrove nursery, its community centers that offer opportunities for afterschool education, and creating new partnerships to better meet its mission.

3. **Social issue:**
   In the wake of Hurricane Maria, all bets are off in terms of community development. Much of the areas Caras operates was destroyed and daily life will take months or years to return to normal. People are moving and social capital has been entirely disrupted. Caras is looking to create a community development map of the areas that they operate, which would clearly outline where youth groups, NGOs, community groups and centers, and schools are located. This information will be valuable in connecting networks and growing new collaborations.

4. **Impact of project on community:**
   Communities are in desperate need of everything right now - food, water, and energy. By the time a CBR Fellow arrives, it's unclear where the need will exactly exist. However, it is very possible, we will still have no idea where like-minded people and organizations are located, and how we might be able to build alliances with other institutions to ensure community development and planning outcomes are created and met. As such, a map of all of the people and organizations on the front lines of community engagement in the areas that Caras works will be essential to fostering an understanding of who is left, who is new, what they are doing, and how partnerships may be formed.
5. **Research project description:**
   Caras is requesting that a researcher assist in categorizing and mapping organizations and individuals who are working in any aspect of community development in the wake of Hurricane Maria. Once a list and map is created, Caras will be better situated to form new partnerships to improve project efficiency and impact.

6. **Methodology:**
   This project will focus on three areas of exploration. First, the researcher will be asked to do a benchmarking of online articles and news stories of organizations and people operating in community development in the region. Next, we will ask the researcher to visit communities and leaders, to seek out other groups or individuals with no online presence. Finally and most importantly, we will need all of these people and groups categorized, logged, and mapped using open street maps. At each stage, it is very important that the researcher document, photograph, and log coordinates of potentially important community actors.

7. **Student Profile:**
   The ideal student will have a background in GIS, community development and planning, ecology, geography, environmental science, or education. The researcher must be fluent in Spanish, and will be asked to travel several days per week via ferry to various communities. They will need to be comfortable entering unfamiliar settings and be capable of navigating a sensitive post-disaster setting.

8. **Commitment Deadline:**
   We will require a commitment before May 1st, 2018.