

Butterfly Farm *Mariposario Tanamá*, Utuado, Puerto Rico

Leonor Hurtado

“The butterfly farm *Mariposario Tanamá* fulfills a dual educational and organizational function for multiple educational levels in the region of Utuado” states Director Dr. Marisol Dávila with great enthusiasm. She states that “the project started in 2006 to promote interactions between children and young people with a common goal: to get to know their environment, understand it in a scientific manner and prepare themselves to preserve and utilize it in a responsible way.” After seven years of working and confirming the effectiveness of this initiative, in 2013 they built the *Mariposario Tanamá*, as a scientific program of the University of Utuado. Here they have developed the area’s research, educational and community-building capabilities, by having this marvelous space where students and families can enjoy and learn together.

Dr. Dávila highlights that “this scientific education space has a broad and important influence on the scientific and humanitarian training in the region of Utuado, because it facilitates the knowledge of butterflies, insects and their role in agriculture, which is the primary activity of production in our region.”

Passionate about life, Marisol highlights that “the study of butterflies allows for an understanding of the interdependency of the elements within the food production process and the human responsibility to respect and preserve all the elements in a natural way.” She affirms “this is a magical space where art and science unite. I am moved by the colors and beauty of butterflies. I am passionate about the scientific study of the lives of these tiny beings that enhance life by pollinating flowers”.

After sharing her joy and enthusiasm as the Director of the *Mariposario*, Dr. Marisol Dávila expresses another sort of emotion; I perceive sadness and anxiety in her face. Full of determination and courage, she denounces “we feel an enormous concern because the Financial Oversight and Management Board of Puerto Rico has threatened to close the University of Puerto Rico in Utuado. This would include closing the *Mariposario*. This is a neoliberal measure that limits the public service of education in an agricultural and farming region. Our University is the only functioning university within a farming region of Puerto Rico. We must organize and defend the University of Utuado. Education is our right.”