



TASH TIMES

Vol 02 – March/April 2019. Oaxaca, Mexico.

www.tashinc.org

GREETINGS

Dear Friends of TASH,

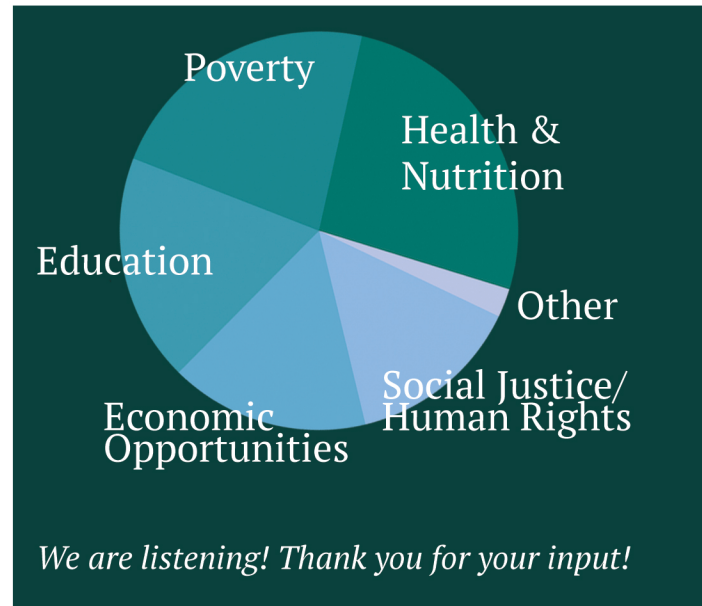
As we humbly seek to further the impact and life changing experience for those in vulnerable situations in Oaxaca and with Father’s Scott official retirement in 2018, we as a Board of Directors feel the need to do a lot of listening. That listening is directed to the people we serve and you, the people who support TASH’s mission. As a first step, we created a survey that we sent to you in the last newsletter. The results from our survey are in and we wanted to share our findings.

To date, we have received and recorded 130 surveys, in which we invited you to check one or more of the options and/or write in comments. From the total responses, you marked the following categories as being important to you: 91% health and nutrition, 78% poverty, 64% education, 56% economic opportunities, and 49% social justice/human rights. In addition, there were 8% write-in comments.

The additional comments included themes of spiritual experience or education, world peace, local charities, and “Father Scott is our primary motivation and we trust you to know best.” We have very good news for you that we have spoken with Father Scott and, though he is not coming out of retirement, he is happy to receive the prayer request form enclosed in the newsletter. Jeff, from our board, will drop those off with Father Scott. In addition, Father Scott is willing to send us a writing contribution to the *TASH Times*, at least once a year until further notice. Please be on the lookout for his contribution by year’s end. We also hope to recycle some of his all-time favorite jokes and post new ones. As the popular quote says, “Laughter is a very underrated tool for healing.”

You will recall from the 2018 newsletters, Father Scott handpicked four of us to serve as the Board of Directors. That was not by accident. We have an accumulated 50+ years of relationship and work with him. That is a special bond, of course. We take very seriously his invitation to carry out the fiduciary and strategic oversight and, ultimately, the mission of the TASH nonprofit organization. Going back to the survey, there were multiple mentions of your trust in TASH and the desire that your money would serve those most in need. In response to those wishes, we aim to give you bimonthly updates in our “Strategic Investment and Transparency” and our “Witness to Oaxaca” sections, where, in this March/April edition, we share with you one remarkable woman’s testimony of how her life was positively impacted both through medical support at Clínica del Pueblo and her work with TASH partner, Puente.

In gratitude,
Pete Noll
TASH Board of Directors



SERVANT LEADERSHIP by Pete Noll

In the theme of listening, I came across this reflection in a blog:

“Servant leadership becomes a living and breathing way of life when we respect and value the act of listening that allows us to increase our knowledge base and be able to empathize with another point of view. Our lives as servant-leaders begin when we tune in to one another and share communication in a space of reciprocity.”

Source: June 20, 2013 “On Service Leadership” by Jessica Zisa

In my two decades in nonprofit work, I have been amazed at what I could accomplish by just listening. Ironically, that was the only option I had when I got the news that I would have the opportunity to serve as a Peace Corps volunteer in Guatemala in 1997. At 23-years-old, I should have probably known that’s what happens when you don’t speak the local language! However, it was a blessing in disguise, because it forced me to listen and observe. Over time, when I finally had enough conversational Spanish, I could finally talk and share.



I imagine that Father Scott’s experience at La Clínica was similar in many respects. In 1999, he didn’t go to Oaxaca with a specific plan in mind. He made a decision to listen to the people’s needs; in this case, it was the original doctors, nurses, and social workers. He then followed his heart and calling to reach out to all of the TASH community to join him in his efforts to serve the poor in Oaxaca, Mexico. I trust that by listening, we will continue to do great works and continue to build community across borders.

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT and TRANSPARENCY

The 2018 annual report, prepared by the Hospital Chief, has been submitted for La Clínica. 12,756 patients came through the doors in 2018. That is an increase of 16.6% from the 10,934 seen in 2017. In addition, we sent money down to support the hire of a medical doctor to serve in a mobile unit of a Franciscan group in the Mixteca.

There were three specific comments, in the survey, about designating donations specifically for La Clínica. Thank you for voicing your concerns. The Board of Directors talked about this with Father Scott, and he stands firmly that his ministry is to serve the poor. And while his first love is La Clínica del Pueblo, he strategically moved to expand to support value-based organizations that meet strict guidelines of transparency, accountability, and human dignity. The work of these organizations can be found on the new TASH website: www.tashinc.org on the “Partners” page.



WITNESS to OAXACA

If you have read Father's newsletter, you are aware of the lack of basic medical services for people without economic resources. And while there is a supposed safety net of government-run clinics and hospitals, the number of urgent cases that we encounter in Oaxaca is mind-blowing.

Yuri is from one of the poorest towns in Oaxaca, ironically named, *Tierra y Libertad* (Land and Liberty). Due to complicated circumstances, the town was never recognized by the government and thus has no access to public finances, which translates to no schools, health clinics, roads, or potable water. In this context, Yuri was born and raised. She suffered hardships, including being raped and impregnated at age 15. However, through her resilience and the support of her family, she gave birth to two boys, and, instead of living in regrets, named them Angel Jesus Mendez Cruz and Angel Alejandro Mendez Cruz, her “two angels” as she shared with me. They are now both six-years-old.

As a single mother, Yuri was forced to drop out of school and find work. At that time, she was participating in one of TASH's nonprofit partners, Puente's workshops on amaranth and nutrition for young mothers and children. Puente then offered her a scholarship and training to work in their regional sales store. Just when it appeared that she had finally found some financial stability, she fell ill.

Yuri was diagnosed with an infected gall bladder and needed a rather urgent surgery. However, the government hospital informed her that there was at least a two-month waiting list. So she went to a private hospital and decided with her family that they would sell what they needed to sell or go into debt to cover the \$1,000 USD cost. \$1,000 is a lot of money, and even more so, when your average income is \$500 a month.



Fortunately – and one of the advantages of being on the ground in Oaxaca – I heard about her case. I immediately knew to contact La Clínica del Pueblo. They were able to attend to her and she had a successful surgery at no cost to her and her family. After two weeks of recovery, she was back to work, feeling healthy and grateful.

From this testimonial, we are reminded of the different categories that were in the survey – poverty, health and medical services, economic opportunities, and human dignity – and how they were all addressed in partnership with TASH and La Clínica.

We understand that TASH can't help everybody. But we hope you are inspired by this testimonial of a low-income single mother. Yuri proved, time and again, that she will never give up, if she is provided the opportunities to continue, opportunities we can provide with our prayers and donations.

HUMOR

Growing up outside of Pittsburgh, Groundhog Day was always significant as we anxiously awaited warmer weather. This year, Punxsutawney Phil emerged from his hole and didn't see a shadow, but as I look at the weather report, it would appear his forecasts aren't always an exact science.

"Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's party!'" - Robin Williams

People who struggle with their income tax filing can be divided into two categories: men and women. (unknown)

The person who said "the truth never hurts" never had to fill out a form 1040. (unknown)



Speaking of spring, if you are in Pittsburgh, please join us for the Olé 5K on April 13, 2019, in Allison Park. Be sure to join us in North Park after the race to enjoy complimentary coffee from Crazy Mocha, a festive post-race buffet, and lots of great music.

More information can be found at www.ole5k.com.



If you would like to make a donation to support the mission in Oaxaca, we would truly appreciate it.

Please make a check out to TASH, Inc. and use the donation envelope included or you can make a secure donation online at www.tashinc.org.