



# TASH TIMES

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[www.tashinc.org](http://www.tashinc.org)

## GREETINGS

Dear Friends,

As the President of TASH's Board, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very Happy New Year! I would like to share some thoughts on the importance of resilience in our lives. Education, intelligence, and talent are powerful forces, but they can accomplish little without resilience. Resilience is so important because adversity abounds. Life can be profoundly unfair. When problems arise, it is tempting to give up. Resilience demands that we persist.

Father Edward Sorin, the founder of the University of Notre Dame, showed great resilience after a fire raged across campus in 1879. I can imagine his discouragement to see his life's work literally go up in flames. Instead of retiring, Father Sorin oversaw the rebirth of his beloved university including the new administration building with its iconic golden dome.

TASH has had its share of challenges during twenty-one years of philanthropy in Oaxaca. There were legal difficulties in purchasing the land and constructing the hospital; there has been high turnover in La Clínica's executive director position; there have been obstacles, such as not having a staff member on the ground to provide timely communication and personalized follow-up. Yet here we are, undaunted, persisting to help those with the most need in Oaxaca with your generous support.

Living in the United States in 2020, we can all count many blessings which enrich our lives to a degree thought unimaginable by previous generations. Those blessings confer upon us a solemn responsibility to continue to fight for what we believe in, for the people whom we love, and for the things that we are trying to accomplish in our lives. Resist, like Father Sorin resisted.

As we turn the page of the calendar to a new decade, I invite you to continue to support TASH's mission in Oaxaca.

God love you.

  
Charley Gates



*Three generations of resilience, Clinica del Pueblo, 2019.*

## ■ SERVANT LEADERSHIP by Pete Noll

Foresight is a characteristic which enables servant leaders to understand lessons from the past and the realities of the present to better inform future decisions. As Charley mentioned, the work at TASH has evolved over 21 years and is possible because of Fr. Scott's and your resiliency. While the core mission of TASH has not changed, as a learning organization, we desire to consistently improve our approach and not shy away from change when it will ultimately lead to greater impact for the people we strive to serve.



*Pete and Friar Justino, strategizing.*

As we begin a new decade, we have another opportunity to reflect on how we can best accomplish our goal of serving those in need in Oaxaca, whether that is a crippling medical issue, access to education for young people, or the creation of economic opportunities for hardworking families. While I have lived in Oaxaca for over 15 years, I continue to be amazed at how nuanced the work is, especially because of the diversity of cultures (16 indigenous groups) and the way communities are divided into 570 distinct municipalities, of which 75% are based on local customs and traditions. Imagine if every Pennsylvania borough was governed in a distinct way and a town assembly was called for all decisions? That is how Oaxaca still operates for the most part.

So rather than throwing out hands up in the air, we must make every effort to carry out our mission in that reality. As practitioners working in these complex environments, it is vital that we use foresight to plan out our strategy so that those who most urgently need access to the services provided by La Clínica del Pueblo and other partner organizations may receive those benefits.

## ■ STRATEGIC INVESTMENT and TRANSPARENCY

As part of our efforts to promote accountability and transparency, we want to assure that we continue to have best practices and policies in place for TASH Inc., but also similar standards for La Clínica and other partner organizations. We believe we can best accomplish this goal by vetting each organization. We are calling for them to send us a detailed project budget beforehand, to facilitate periodic site visits for me (and Board members when they are in Oaxaca) to each project; and to work with us to apply internal controls based on international standards.

Having worked with dozens of smaller nonprofits, I (Pete) found that they are often big on heart but lacking professional accounting and audit controls. While we still expect our hearts to be touched, the Board and I feel strongly we should take the current stringent oversight even further, especially as your generosity abounds and there is a lot of money being sent down to Oaxaca.

## WITNESS to OAXACA

The TASH Board of Directors approved a \$1,000 donation to a youth group (six young men, three young women), to allow them to share the spirit of Christmas in El Llano de la Canoa, an isolated indigenous village about 3 hours from Oaxaca City. Over a day and a half, they gave out toys, blankets, clothing and food baskets to more than 250 villagers. They organized games for the kids, and Ezquiel shared with me about how the community received them with open arms —*brazos abiertos*.



*El Llano de la Canoa*

I had the unique opportunity to be approached by Ezquiel (nicknamed “Cheque”) last year. He shared with me that he and his friends wanted to give back to those who were less fortunate than them. I was struck by that servant leadership at a young age. In addition, I knew that he came from a rural community about 45 minutes from Oaxaca City, so was even more surprised that he and his friends had this idea to find a village with even more need than their own.

When I asked Cheque what was the motivation for the idea, I was surprised to find out that he was studying Mechanical Engineering. He shared that, since he was a kid, he was curious to understand how things worked. But then he went on to say, that his passion grew to airplanes and that he had passed the first round of exams to study aeronautical engineering at a prestigious school in Monterrey. However, the second round of exams required fluency in English, which he didn’t have. But instead of being discouraged, he said that during his trip, he observed the vast contrast between a modernized city like Monterrey and the rural area he grew up in. He told me the first thing that occurred to him when he returned to Oaxaca was to do something for the rural villages. That something turned into the youth project that we are grateful to support.



*Musical chairs are a hit at any party in any language!*

Cheque now hopes that with his engineering degree he can design agricultural equipment to help the communities that rely on farming for their livelihoods. Before I could end the conversation, Cheque intervened, “Please send our infinite gratitude to the people (TASH’s community) whom we have never met, but trusted in us, to make this experience possible. Please let them know they *“tienen su casa en Oaxaca”*, which translates to “you have a place to stay in Oaxaca.”

At TASH, we are inspired to help those young people who are giving of their time and talents to help those in need, especially over the holidays. Thank you, *gracias!*

## HUMOR



A New Year's resolution is one that goes in one year and out the other.

I love when they “drop the ball” in Times Square. It's a nice reminder of what I did all year.

My brother's New Year's resolution is to move out of my parents' house. You'd think after 49 years he'd try another one.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Registration is now open for the April 4, 2020 Ole 5K.**

**Please visit: [www.ole5k.com](http://www.ole5k.com) or [www.tashinc.org/ole5k](http://www.tashinc.org/ole5k).**

This year's Ole 5 K race to support TASH's work will be held on April 4 in Harmar Grove Pavilion at Pie Traynor in North Park.

We also are going to expand the visibility of our sponsor businesses and individuals.

If you are interested, please fill out the form online or contact me: [pete.noll@tashinc.org](mailto:pete.noll@tashinc.org)

## WE'RE ONLINE! @tashincorg

As many of you may have experienced, the tax code changed on January 1, 2019. Because of higher standardized individual deduction, many people have elected to take that option, as opposed to a detailed itemized deduction. Therefore, many of you may no longer be itemizing your donations. But for those who do, we can happily provide you with a donation receipt. Please email me at [admin@tashinc.org](mailto:admin@tashinc.org) or send a note to our Covenant mailing address to request such a receipt

If you donate online, the system automatically sends you an email receipt. In addition, for check donations, we have been sending a receipt for all donations over \$250 to keep our administrative duties streamlined and to do our small part for the environment by using less paper.

**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](http://www.tashinc.org).**