



TASH TIMES

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www.tashinc.org

■ GREETINGS

Dear Friends,

As President of the Board of TASH and as an orthopedic surgeon in active clinical practice, I would like to tell you about some things that are happening at the nonprofit hospital where I work in upstate New York and at the Anna Seethaler Hospital (La Clínica del Pueblo) in Oaxaca with respect to COVID-19.

On March 16, the American College of Surgeons made the unprecedented recommendation that all elective surgeries should be delayed due to the strain on the healthcare system placed by COVID-19. Almost overnight, my office volume dried up and my surgical volume decreased by more than 80%. I was limited to operations on patients with urgent injuries or fractures.

The loss of revenue from the delivery of elective healthcare put the hospital where I work under significant financial duress. Following a \$20 million dollar loss in April, mandatory pay cuts were instituted (20% for the CEO and 10% for all physicians), and many staff were furloughed.

In the last month, operations have begun to return to normal, but some changes persist. More surgical care has been pushed to outpatient ambulatory surgery centers to keep people out of the hospital. Telehealth utilization has surged. Before the pandemic, I had not done a single virtual visit; now I do a few per day. Waiting rooms remain empty as patients wait in their cars and then are brought directly into the exam room. Like other companies, my hospital has halted recruitment for new positions and is moving forward with a smaller employee footprint. This has important consequences for a small town where the hospital is the biggest employer.

In Oaxaca, La Clínica has faced similar challenges. La Clínica's patient volumes dropped precipitously when the virus hit. In-patient consultations dropped by 50%, and specialty consults decreased from 800 per month to fewer than a handful of cases per month. Surgical procedures came to a standstill, suspended indefinitely by federal mandate. La Clínica does not have an intensive care unit nor any ventilators and therefore is not equipped to care for COVID-19 positive patients. To date, 164 patients and staff have been sent for COVID-19 testing; thirty-seven have been positive including two doctors and one nurse. Dr. Gabriel, the medical director, estimates that it may be several months before the volumes of La Clínica return to normal. Despite these challenges, La Clínica remains committed to its mission to serve the poor and remains open with 24-hour around-the-clock availability for walk-in care. It has drawn upon its financial reserves to remain open.

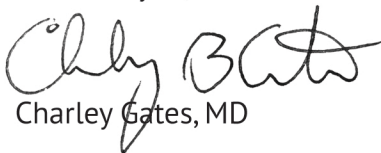
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Unlike the hospital where I work, which received financial relief from the federal government, La Clinica has not received any financial support from the Mexican federal government nor from any other agency. TASH remains the sole source of external support for La Clinica.

These times are unprecedented. Thank you for your past generosity, and I ask for your continued prayers and support.

God love you,


Charley Gates, MD



SERVANT LEADERSHIP

(Fr. Scott Seethaler shares a reflection on the new logo)

In the last newsletter, Pete Noll did a great job describing the growth that has occurred in our TASH ministry to Oaxaca over the past twenty years. The colorful images and the numbers he presented reflected the impact TASH has made during these years. What started out in 1998 during a visit to my friends in Oaxaca has blossomed into a hospital for the poor, strong relationships with other nonprofits that help the poor, and 20 years of economic support for Oaxaca.

Wanting a clinic to serve the poor meant we had to apply for nonprofit status from the Mexican government. I was told that the government was reluctant to give this status because it meant less tax money. To everyone's surprise, we received that status in a year. To get the status we had to describe our mission and vision, establish by-laws, and have a board of directors in Mexico. Finally, we needed a logo for the clinic. For twenty years, we have used the logo of a mother and child. It fit the hospital perfectly because mothers and children are the ones who suffer most from poverty and lack of healthcare. We used the original logo interchangeably for La Clínica in Mexico and my US 501(c)(3), TASH.



With the increase of ministries that TASH now supports, the board of directors in the United States wanted a logo that would represent all our ministries in Oaxaca. With this newsletter, we are launching a new logo.

First, let me point out the two words that were chosen for the logo: "Health and Humanity." Health, because our flagship ministry will always be the Anna Seethaler Hospital (La Clínica del Pueblo). Humanity was chosen to describe the other nonprofits that we support that are not directly involved with healthcare, but minister to the many needs that poor adults and children have.

The silhouette in the middle of the logo is of me. The color brown in the silhouette represents the brown Capuchin robe that I wear. During my twenty years of ministering in Oaxaca, I resisted having my name put on any building or project. The board knew this and spoke to me about why they wanted the silhouette of me. They told me that they never want people to forget that I created TASH and worked tirelessly to bring about its growth. I accepted the board's desire for the silhouette. I hope you like the new logo.

God bless you!
Father Scott

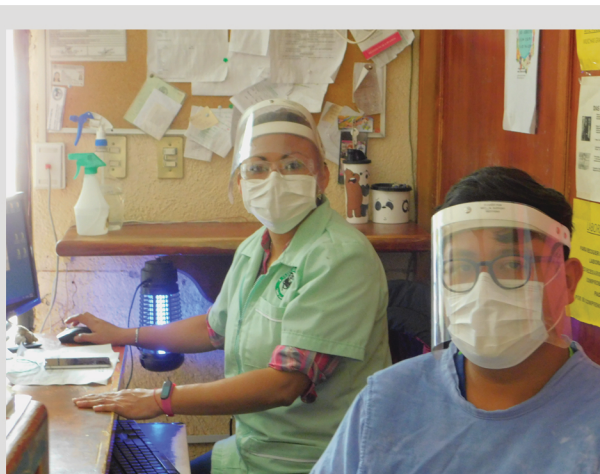
WITNESS to OAXACA

In the last newsletter, I reported 4,000 positive COVID-19 cases and 400 attributed deaths. As of September 1, in Oaxaca, they have reached 13,271 and 1,251 deaths. We are thankful for la Clinica staff and all our partner organizations who have remained committed to their work during these uncertain times. In this edition of Witness to Oaxaca, I wanted to share with you a special testimony from a remarkable TASH partner.

José Rentería Pérez is a Roman Catholic priest who has dedicated his life, like Fr. Scott, to serve those with less. He leads an amazing ministry in Oaxaca. Within his parish, there is a community that survives off the city dump. I asked Fr. Renteria if he would share with us his testimony and reflection over the past four months. To respect the confidentiality of the people, he has only included the first initial of their names.

Pandemic: Faces, hearts, ears, hands, moans, and words

(L): "Why all at once?: me with cancer and my daughter and husband infected with COVID-19, while my young grandson underwent surgery for a brain tumor and two hernias... there is not enough money to eat... the energies are running out, but the crying persists... God and prayer via WhatsApp sustain us... we are getting better... we now have food to eat... my grandson, he is healing."



(S): (Via phone): "I recently split up with my wife, I ache for my children... Could you listen to me personally?" (In person): "Not having a father hardened me. I've never cried..."

Three hours listening, then at the end he cried: "We are in a pandemic but... I need my Dad... can I give you a hug?"

(J): "My brother is in agony... days without speaking or eating... Can you hear his confession from a distance?"

(Placing the hearing aid in his ear): "... (N) God hears your spirit, express what is in your heart." (Immediately): sighs, weeping, deep groans... time stands still... I had never experienced such deep fellowship in God. Then: the silence of Eternal Love.

(J): "They donated food supplies to us and we came to distribute them."

"How did you think of us, if we are of different creeds?"

"The Samaritan helped without knowing the brother's creed."

"It's true, thank you very much. God bless everyone... Another day we'll meet." The days passed: "From the village, they brought us coffee, we give it away too."



A man who lives and works on the garbage dump:

“We are very grateful. The different groups of garbage collectors, we were not in contact before, now we are weaving trust. The food supplies, the masks, and the gloves have brought us closer. Not everything in the pandemic is bad. A man from the other group offered his van to transport whatever is needed.”

Young sign language interpreter in the parish: “Unexpectedly we were asked to help as interpreters, via Zoom (video conferencing technology), in a seminar about disabilities that was held for four days in Guadalajara. The work and team support, the gratitude of the organizers and the joy of the participants calmed my nerves. We grew together.”

In the pandemic and human crisis that we are living globally, the Holy Spirit is creating something new from the depths and intensity of human suffering. In so many crosses the resurrection is emerging with elements that we would not have experienced without this present moment. Let us wait and collaborate with the action of the Spirit.

Pbro. José Rentería Pérez

Parish of San Bartolomé Apóstol, Coyotepec, Oax.

UPCOMING EVENTS & UPDATES



2020 Ole 5k Benefit Race: With two months to the scheduled race date of Saturday, October 24, we are excited to give you an update that we continue to prepare for an in-person race with all required safety measures. Your well-being will always be our priority.

We are eager to share that **there will also be a virtual race option**, so that those of you who live outside the Pittsburgh area or prefer to participate on your own, can still be part of the 2020 Ole 5k Benefit race!

If you are registered, for now, there is nothing more to be done at the current time.

If you are not yet registered, you may sign up: <https://tashinc.org/ole5k/race-info/>

Then choose your preference between an in-person versus virtual option.

If you have any questions please contact us at pete.noll@tashinc.org or call Kathleen at (636) 399-1709.

Any future updates will be posted on the website: www.tashinc.org/ole5k.

   @tashincorg – Follow us on social media for more updates.

**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.**