



TASH TIMES

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www.tashinc.org

■ GREETINGS

Dear Friends:

How do you feel about birthdays? Some people dread them. Other people stretch the truth. A little girl asked her grandmother how old she was. The grandmother said, "I am 59 and holding." The little girl asked, "How old would you be if you let go?" God willing, this June, I will be 78. So as my dad used to say, "I'm pushing 80."



A family waits to see the doctor after cataract surgery at La Clínica.

I write about birthdays because as you get older, you become more reflective about life. Each year as I - and the Anna Seethaler Hospital - grow older, I think about the hospital's financial security. My concern is the age of my benefactors. Many of you have been with me since the first time I asked for help in 1999. Others have become benefactors since then. Although I have no statistics, I have this sense that the majority of you are over 60 years of age. I say this because, frequently, people write on the newsletter's response sheet: "I am now on a fixed income and can no longer send you a donation." Others send a smaller donation with an apology. There is no need to apologize. I understand.

If you haven't introduced my ministry to your children and grandchildren, would you please do so? I know that many of them do not go to church. However, they may have a heart for the poor and are looking for a charity that they can trust with their money. Here is a chance for you to evangelize indirectly. I believe that they will show an interest in why you give to TASH. As you tell them about your experience, they might be willing to donate. Tell them that the average donation to the newsletter is \$20. So you are not suggesting they give a lot of money. Yet imagine how much can be raised by many new benefactors giving \$20 once or twice a year. The fact that you give makes your testimony credible.

The State of Oaxaca has always been neglected by the leaders of Mexico except during the elections. Politicians make great promises but never carry them through. Oaxaca is an agrarian state which does not produce much taxable money. Therefore the leaders of the country find little reason to invest time and money in its future. The people of Oaxaca will always need our help because they have been neglected and forgotten. The scope of our ministry continues to grow as we see the need. Whether we are helping the sick, street kids, people at the garbage dump, the hungry, or orphans, TASH is Jesus with skin on for the poor and the sick.

Please spread the good news about what we are doing and ask your family to join us in building a better future for these gentle, loving, long-suffering people.

You are daily in my prayers.
God bless you!
Father Scott



AMOax volunteers deliver food and sanitary provisions. Learn more about this project on page 3-4.

■ SERVANT LEADERSHIP (by Charley Gates)

Margaret Mead, a prominent American cultural anthropologist, was once asked what she considered to be the first sign of civilization. Instead of discussing religious artifacts or the appearance of certain tools, Mead stated that a healed fracture of the femur bone found 15,000 years ago was the first evidence of civilization. As a board-certified orthopedic surgeon who has fixed hundreds of broken femurs in the operating room, this definition resonated with me. The femur is the largest bone in the body and connects the hip joint to the knee joint. In ancient times, a broken femur was a death sentence. Mead explained that the femur bone healed because the person survived. This person survived because someone else carried him to shelter, brought him food, and protected him from dangers. To Mead, this profound act of service to a mortally wounded person was the first sign of civilization.



Visiting a young boy who lives out by the city dump.

In my view, service to others is the highest calling. To paraphrase the 1997 Italian comedy-drama movie “Life Is Beautiful,” serving is a supreme art. God is the first servant. God serves men, but He is not a servant to men. God sent his beloved Son into the world as an example for us. Jesus’ life centered on service. In John 13:1-17, Jesus performed the simple yet powerful act of washing the feet of his disciples to inspire the disciples to go forth into the world to “wash one another’s feet.”

I have visited Oaxaca seven times since 2012. I vividly recall my first visit to the neighborhood of Vicente Guerrero, a community that has sprouted up adjacent to the municipal garbage dump. Here live “Los Pепенadores” (the trash pickers) and their families. Their livelihood depends on sifting through the trash, looking for objects of value. The conditions are stark: dirt floors, laminate roofs, the putrid smell of garbage, and no utilities including no running water. Crime is rampant. Despite the circumstances, there is resilience, strength, and optimism among the people who live there. TASH sponsors several initiatives in this neighborhood, including scholarships for nine students. These students have dreams to go into nursing, teaching, and other professions.

Through TASH, there is an opportunity to support projects that serve the neediest in Oaxaca. In our daily lives, there are also opportunities to serve others. There is a saying: “Be kind; every one that you meet is fighting a hard battle.” Showing love and lending a helping hand to members of our family, to our colleagues at work, and to random people whom we encounter during the day are examples of straightforward ways that we can “wash one another’s feet.”

I am grateful for your continued support of TASH. God love you.

Charley B. Gates, MD
Board President, TASH, Inc



Photos of some of the children helped through partners of TASH including educational programs, farming cooperatives, and medical clinics.

■ WITNESS TO OAXACA (by Pete Noll)

UPDATE ON JUVENTINA – In the January/February edition, I shared with you the story of Juventina, who had her knee replacement surgery at La Clinica del Pueblo, “Anna Seethaler.” Many of you responded that her fortitude moved you. Together with the social worker, I went to her home in San Martin Lachila to see how she was recovering. She warmly greeted us and, in generous Oaxacan fashion, offered us some homemade atole, a corn-based porridge drink. She said that she was now able to take short walks, with the aid of a cane, around her property. She is looking forward to being able to get back to full-time care of raising her animals and growing her crops, as the family needs the income.

She is also still grieving the unexpected loss of her 37-year-old son by respiratory failure this past January 22. We were joined by his widow and their two sons, eight and ten years old, shown here in the photo. She said that her faith and family would carry her through these emotionally difficult times.

I was also surprised to hear that when her 84-year old husband Pio Matías González was injured in farm accident two years before; and that he suffered terrible luck during the procedure. Without knowing where to go and with no health insurance, they came across the Red Cross in Oaxaca. They had to sell off family property, as they didn’t have sufficient cash available to pay the medical costs. Unfortunately, on top the medical bill, the surgery was not successful. He has been suffering chronic back pain ever since, living mostly bed-ridden and needing constant tending to. Also, owing to diabetes, he is losing his eyesight and has hearing loss. Once Juventina can walk, we will have them meet with the doctors and see what we can do for him.

As we wrapped up, Juventina shared that she was grateful for all the support from La Clinica del Pueblo and the TASH community. She is a daily reminder of the important and needed work that is provided to low-income individuals and families in Oaxaca, Mexico.

BUILDING SOLIDARITY IN COMMUNITY – Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, a 100% volunteer not-for-profit group emerged with a mission of helping those suffering from hunger or other immediate effects from loss or reduction of employment. Along with negative health impacts, are the economic ones. According to official Ministry of Health statistics, Oaxaca has accumulated 45,086 contagious cases with a 7.7% mortality rate as of April 18. Most of these cases are concentrated in urban Oaxaca. Thus, the primary target population for us has been Oaxaca City and the outlying barrios.

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The initiative AMOax could be translated into “I LOVE Oaxaca”, (“Amo Oaxaca”) but actually is the acronym for “Apoyo Mutuo Oaxaca”, or Mutual Help Oaxaca. TASH has made key contributions to allow us to buy food and supplies for the project initiatives. Since April 2020, I serve on the supervisory committee.

In August, together with a group of active community members, we opened the first soup kitchen in San Juan Chapultepec that has served over 4,800 hot meals to those who don't have enough to eat. In a recent visit, I saw that they were also setting aside dozens of meals to take down the steps to reach people with disabilities or limited mobility. Photos to the right show this community-led service work.

In addition, at AMOax, we have provided food and sanitary packages to people across the state of Oaxaca, facilitated medical attention to a young girl who suffered burns from a kitchen fire and most recently, provided financial support to a young 28-year women who was afflicted with an aggressive ovarian cancer. This work is only possible because of the mutual support of your contributions and all the hardworking volunteers willing to put their time and energy to carry out the projects on the ground. To learn more, visit www.tashinc.org/partners.



■ FUTURE EVENTS & UPDATES



Photo: BA Photography, 2020.



2021 Ole 5k Benefit Race: Register at www.ole5k.com. We have reserved the same venue for this year's race on Saturday, October 2, so please mark your calendars.

Planned Giving: A gift to TASH improves lives. Behind every patient treated are loyal supporters, like you, who make their care possible. Every time an individual enters La Clínica, receives affordable and quality attention, or needs emergency care, your generosity is felt and remembered. In addition to supporting the mission of TASH, a planned gift can provide substantial tax advantages, especially on gifts of stocks and real estate. To learn more, you can visit the website: <https://tashinc.org/donate/planned-giving/> or contact us at 412-219-9099.



Do you use social media? Follow @tashincorg for updates on our work.

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.