



TASH TIMES

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www.tashinc.org

■ GREETINGS

Dear Friends:

We write the newsletter to inspire you with the hope that you will find our ministry to the poor in Oaxaca, Mexico, worthy of your prayers and financial support. When I first began to ask people in 1999 for their financial support for my Oaxacan ministry, people would tell me that there is plenty of poverty in the United States, so why not direct your efforts to our own country. My response was that I have witnessed poverty in the United States, and most often, it is because the poor here are not aware of or take advantage of all the programs that exist in our country to help them.



A young boy works at city landfill to provide additional income for his family.

There are limited programs for the poor in Oaxaca. Other programs like food stamps, Medicaid, free clinics and charitable organizations are scarce and fall short of meeting most families basic needs. I truly believe that my presence and ministry in Oaxaca is the Will of God. There are times (perhaps you have experienced one) when God nudges you to do something, and you pursue the nudge even though you have no idea where it will lead you. My response to God's nudge was to go to Oaxaca and help those who had no healthcare. Soon I was meeting doctors, architects, lawyers, social workers, and laborers. Once the clinic was opened on Jan. 1, 2000, the poor began to come. We share their stories with you in each newsletter.

Although I am not one to use the word miracle casually, I have witnessed miracles in the past 21 years. One elderly man who was completely blind with cataracts for seven years came to the hospital. His family traveled many hours to bring him. He had his sight completely restored. A young man, who was sent home from the public hospital because they found nothing wrong with him, was carried to our hospital by his family. He was near death when he arrived. Our doctors diagnosed the problem, quickly operated, and after a long recovery at our hospital, he went home and was able to go back to work. A young mother who had a brain tumor was turned away from private hospitals because she could not afford the cost of the surgery. Her situation was brought to our attention, and TASH paid for the surgery. She is now healthy and caring for her family.

The stories that the poor bring to us of being turned away from private hospitals because they don't have enough money are heartbreaking. Scripture tells us that the Lord hears the cry of the poor. He helps them primarily by using humans to do His work. I saw a cartoon once that had a man complaining to God about all the poverty and violence in our world. The man said to God: "Why don't you do something." God answered: "I did! I created you." Thank you for hearing the cry of the poor.

Daily you are in my prayers.

God bless you!

Fr. Scott

■ Witness to Oaxaca (by Pete Noll)

In the last newsletter, I shared that the COVID-19 restrictions were slowly lifting in Oaxaca. Unfortunately, that trend reversed dramatically and, by early August, Oaxaca began to report peak cases not seen since mid-2020. Having said that, La Clínica is working within those restrictions to assure that those sick and in need will still receive quality and affordable attention. Here is the story of Brenda Marcos Juárez, a young mother who needed emergency assistance.

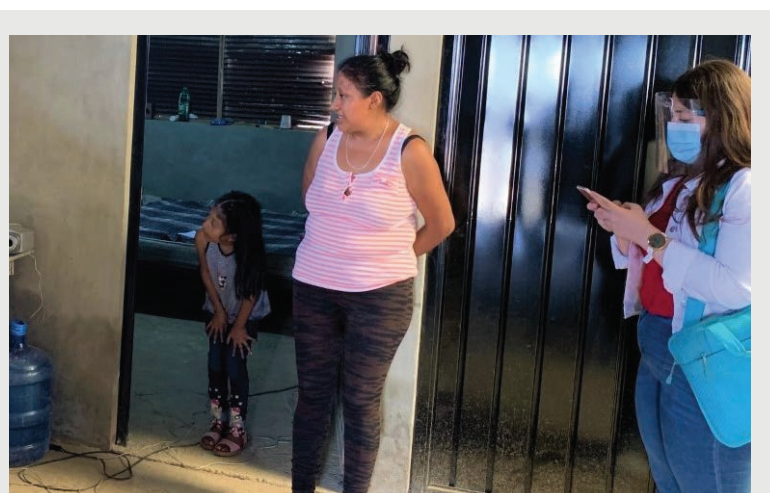
Brenda was born in San Juan Chicomezúchil, a village located in the Sierra Norte in the state of Oaxaca. Her grandparents, parents, and two brothers continue to live in the village, although her father passed away. Brenda left the village eight years ago and is now 32 and lives with her husband and two daughters, 6 years old and 2 months old, in Paraje la Ciénega, Santa Cruz Xoxocotlán. But now, Brenda is worried for her widowed mother, whose primary income was cooking for group events that have been canceled for the past year-and-a-half due to the pandemic.

Now in Oaxaca, Brenda is a domestic worker cleaning homes from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Her husband works odd jobs in construction. In the two homes where she worked for seven months while expecting her second child, the owners offered two meals to Brenda and her daughter. In exchange for these long hours, Brenda received 80 pesos, or \$4 dollars/day, and no benefits since it is considered an informal job. Due to the lack of income, the family lived in a single-room home with electricity but no other basic services.

While they were barely making ends meet, Brenda started to have difficulties with her pregnancy. After visiting the gynecologist at La Clínica, he detected a cyst and complications for a natural birth. Therefore she would need to undergo a cesarean to assure the health of the mother and child. In a private clinic, she would have had to take out a loan for nearly 15,400 pesos, or \$760 dollars. This would take 190 days – 2,660 hours – to earn enough to pay back that amount without using one peso to care for her family. She shared with me that she had heard about La Clínica from a friend who received quality attention and referred her there. Now she is very happy and grateful to receive the help she needed.



During the 6-month rainy season in Oaxaca, Brenda and her family, like too many, find it difficult to access their home.



Brenda & her daughter receive a follow-up visit from a La Clínica social worker.

Brenda and her daughter are just one of the many families who are down to their last options, but thanks to your continued support of La Clínica, have more hope for a better quality of life. If you visit the TASH Website (www.tashinc.org) Impact page, you will see that the hospital is close to having reached 200,000 low-income patients, which is no small miracle!

“Every person you help . . .
makes ripples in society.”
- Fr. Scott Seethaler

■ Servant Leadership (Interview with Gaby Chávez)

In January, the TASH Board approved funding to support a local orphanage to build two new dormitories to provide a home for more children. When I met with Gaby and heard her story, I immediately felt that we had connected with a servant leader.

Below are excerpts from an August interview with Gaby Chávez, Program Manager of Simply Smiles, an orphanage located in Vicente Guerrero, Oaxaca.

How did you come to arrive at Simply Smiles? “I myself grew up in an orphanage in Oaxaca. My parents are both alive, but I come from a village that only had an elementary school. My parents couldn’t afford to board me in the city to live and study, but an aunt knew of an orphanage that would allow me to go to junior high. At that age, I only assumed that those challenges were part of normal life. At the orphanage, I got to know a volunteer, now the founder of Simply Smiles, Bryan. He and his wife were instrumental in my life journey.”



Gaby with some of the children who live at the orphanage.

In addition, Gaby reflected on her grandparents, whom she called pillars of her childhood. “They taught me never to let anyone make me feel less because I was indigenous or spoke an indigenous language.” She added, “Although my grandparents couldn’t have even known all that existed outside their village, they deeply believed that with dedication and effort, I could accomplish what I set out to do.”

At age 17, Gaby was ready to apply for college. However, 2006 was a tumultuous year in Oaxaca, with political uprising and the schools not accepting new applicants. Fearing a lost opportunity, Bryan, with his friends and family, hatched a plan to allow Gaby to go to the States to study. She shared, “I had no idea what I was getting into.” But Gaby had courage and faith that “this is what my family would want” and accepted the opportunity. She recalls one of the first assignments her teacher gave the class to play “pretend shop.” Gaby laughed, “I didn’t even know what U.S. money looked like ... what is this thing, the quarter!” She studied hard and got her English certificate that would allow her to study and received an associate B.A. from Sacred Heart University in Connecticut.



The new boys’ and girls’ dormitories at Simply Smiles orphanage were funded by the generous support of TASH’s donors.

How did you know you wanted to come back to Oaxaca?

“While it is hard to describe in words, I felt a strong pull to return to Oaxaca and give back to people who were living in similar situations that I had known as a child.” Also, she wanted to be able to be closer to her family. “What if they got sick and I was so far away?” In 2015 she returned, and with tremendous determination, she started the new orphanage from the ground up. Today, it is a heartwarming home for the children.

(Interview continued on page 4..)

As we wrapped up our conversation, I asked her about servant leadership. “I believe that leadership starts with listening. It is also about creating a home-like atmosphere so that people feel safe and supported as they develop their skills, talents, and emotions.”

She shared that life continues to impress her, “that there are still people with a heart for another, as was the experience with TASH.” She reflects on how we arrived when they had a specific need to build the additional boys’ and girls’ dormitories. She concluded: “I shared with the orphans at our home, as a way to fully appreciate the dorms, they (the dorms) will be here for a long time, not only to make living more comfortable for them, but also for orphans who will arrive next, and who may not have even been born yet.”



Gaby & the kids on an afternoon walk.

Personally, I (Pete) was amazed how efficiently Simply Smiles were able to put together the construction project during the pandemic; and to feel all the positive energy and gratitude when I visit. While La Clínica del Pueblo is at the heart of TASH’s mission, it is inspiring to reach out and answer a call to help others in need.

■ FUTURE EVENTS & UPDATES



Photo: BA Photography, 2020

2021 Ole 5k Benefit Race: Register at www.ole5k.com. The start is Saturday, October 2 at 10 a.m. in North Park Saturday, so sign up now. Two weeks and counting!



We will be working closely with the North Park authorities and race company to assure that all safety protocols are followed and that it is a wonderful event. You will receive emails ahead of time regarding the race packet pick-up and registration information.

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.