



# TASH TIMES

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## ■ GREETINGS

Dear Friends:

Someone once said that there are three stages in life: “Youth, Middle Age and You look good.” I have reached the third stage. I will be 80 at the end of June and whenever I tell people this, they say: “You look good.” When they say this, I can’t help but wonder to whom or what are they comparing me? A little girl once asked her grandma how old she was. Grandma said that she was 59 and holding. The little girl asked: “How old would you be if you let go?”

In 1998, God opened the door for me to visit a friend who was working in Oaxaca. My very first visit had us discussing how we could create a medical clinic for the poor. The clinic/hospital will celebrate its Twenty-Fifth Anniversary in 2025. I can’t thank all of you enough for your prayers and financial support. You have made a big difference in the lives of the poor in Oaxaca.

A friend of mine wants to write my biography, which is quite a humbling experience. He presents me with questions and I do my best to answer them. Recently he asked me: “Of all the things that you have been able to accomplish in your life, which one is the most rewarding?” Without any hesitation I said that it was my involvement in Oaxaca. For twenty-five years I have told the story of the poor in Oaxaca and was blessed with many wonderful people who have shared my dream.

Once the hospital was firmly established, I began to look for other ways to help the poor, especially children. Children are the most fragile members of a society. They are vulnerable and completely at the mercy of adults. Every visit I made to the hospital, I saw children crying in their mothers’ arms.

Now that I am turning 80, I would like to celebrate my birthday by helping one more group of children. They live at an orphanage. It is called “Ciudad de los Niños.” (City of Children). In 2019 an earthquake seriously damaged a part of a dormitory and it had to be torn down. I would like to raise \$66,000 to help rebuild the dormitory that will house 50 children. Would you be willing to help me rebuild the dormitory? It would be a great birthday gift. Send back the response sheet from this newsletter and mark “birthday gift” on your check. Since God has a special place in His Heart for children, I know you will receive a special blessing for your generosity.

Wishing you many blessings!

Fr. Scott



*Ciudad de los Niños children receive a healthy breakfast to start the day.*

## ■ Servant Leadership – The Power of Hope - by Charley B. Gates, MD

“Hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things, and no good thing ever dies.” – Andy Dufresne

In 1994, the movie *The Shawshank Redemption* dominated the box office and was nominated for seven Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Actor. The movie is based on author Stephen King’s novella, *Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption*. One of the story’s key themes is the power of hope.

In the movie, banker Andy Dufresne is an innocent man serving a life sentence at Shawshank State Penitentiary for a crime that he did not commit. He was framed for the double murder of his wife and her lover by a petty thief. Despite this profound injustice, Andy never gives up his hope to reclaim his freedom. This distinguishes him from the other prisoners who grow accustomed to life within the prison walls. As one prisoner explains, “These walls are funny. First, you hate ‘em, then you get used to ‘em. Enough time passes, you get so you depend on them.” Andy, however, sustains his hope for freedom by recreating aspects of his prior life within the prison: he finds a library, he carves a small chess set, and he finds use for his accounting talents. Eventually, his hope takes the form of a plan to chisel away at the wall in his cell. Over the course of 25 years, he digs a tunnel that ultimately carries him to freedom.

In Oaxaca, there is a cycle of poverty that functions as an urban prison. The walls of this prison are malnutrition, minimal education, faulty role models, and an urgency to meet the daily needs of subsistence. Families with limited resources send their children to the streets to earn money by begging or selling goods, thereby foregoing any type of education or job training. As these children grow and mature, they often pursue this same lifestyle for themselves and their families. There is little hope for a better future.

TASH supports a scholarship program, administered by Oaxaca Streetchildren Grassroots, that aims to instill hope in these families by breaking this cycle of poverty. The program is comprehensive. In addition to the monetary scholarship, there is support for many of the logistical challenges that these families face: lack of transportation and internet, food security, and substance abuse or violence within the home, among others. The program employs social workers, tutors, and other support staff who help these families to address the root causes of these problems. By addressing more than the scholastic aspect of the students’ lives, the program seeks to optimize the chances of success for each student.



Visit to meet with scholarships students at the Center for Hope in Oaxaca.

During my most recent visit to Oaxaca, we enjoyed a lively, in-person roundtable conversation with some of the scholarship students and their parents. They ranged in ages from 8 years old to 14 years old. We had a great conversation. After some general questions about their favorite activities and interests in sports, we asked them what they wanted to do with their lives. I was pleased to hear that every child had a specific answer! One wanted to be a pilot. One wanted to be a teacher. One wanted to be a physician. These are real possibilities for these students. They are doing well in school, and they have positive role models in their lives and ready access to other support staff. These students have a clear path forward.

At its core, hope is the belief that tomorrow will be better than today. For Andy Dufresne, this means tunneling through the physical walls that surround him to reclaim his freedom. For the scholarship students in Oaxaca, this means breaking down the

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*Servant Leadership, continued*

invisible walls that contain them. In this way, these students can pursue their dreams propelled by the power of hope. Your prayers and generous support of TASH make all of this possible. Thank you.

God love you.

Charley B. Gates, MD  
President, TASH Board of Directors

## ■ Witness to Oaxaca – by Pete Noll

Once the smoke cleared from the consequences of the early stages of the pandemic in 2020, the **TASH Board of Directors** made a bold decision to accelerate funding to those most in need. As we can imagine, often, those living in extremely vulnerable situations are greatly affected in their health, as well as in their economic and social conditions. With the *Clinica* nonprofit hospital always at the heart of our mission, the Board asked me to seek out additional projects that supported other urgent human needs: the loss of employment, low-income students who need to return to school, children who were orphaned or abandoned, and clean potable water. **Many of the early results are in!** TASH sent down up to 3x the amount of money than recent years, thanks to your generosity. Together, and as Fr. Scott and Dr. Gates mentioned, we are helping three orphanages, covering 60 student scholarships, and most recently, began a pilot program at a rural primary school to provide them with potable water. What follows is a brief description of the water project.

Here in the community of Soledad ETLA, Oaxaca, a group of dedicated parents and teachers started up a primary school. Because the community is not formally recognized by the state government, they would have to get by with their resourcefulness and pass-the-hat donations. In Soledad (translated to Loneliness), the families migrate in from different parts of the state, and they speak distinct indigenous languages, Mixe, Mixteco, Zapoteco, and Chatino, in addition to Spanish. They have a parents' committee that organizes local fundraising to try to hold the school together. However, even that wasn't enough. Fortunately, they were put in touch with TASH and we supported a \$1,000 construction of the final stage of the school. It was during a visit that I noticed they had a well but were purchasing purified jugs of water. They shared with me that the well could be contaminated with groundwater or other contaminants that fall into the well.



Visit to rural primary school to test the water filter.



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*Witness to Oaxaca, continued*

This turned out to be a perfect opportunity to test a Sawyer filter that purports to filter up to 1 million gallons of contaminated water. It clearly passed the eye test, as we saw the cloudy well water come out of the filter crystal clear. However, for the health and safety of the primary school children, plus ethical reasons, it would be necessary to have the water tested, before and after, and I contacted a biology friend of mine who worked with testing labs in Oaxaca. As of the writing of this article, we are awaiting the final results to assure that clean water can be provided to children. Fr. Scott mentioned how they are fragile and often more vulnerable to sickness than adults are.

**This project has huge potential.** We can get the filters for about \$50 dollars to provide a viable tool to communities across Oaxaca. We will continue to test the adoption of the filters and other viable options amongst our partner organizations as we analyze the potential to scale up in the coming months and years. At TASH, we believe that clean water is a human right and a necessity. We hope you are as inspired as we are with our expansion into this pilot project: *Water for All*.



## FUTURE EVENTS & UPDATES



Six months and counting! We hope that you will join us as a sponsor, racer, volunteer, or race day attendee as **we celebrate the 15th edition of the Ole 5k Benefit Race**. This year, we will be organizing a sponsor “*Building Bridges Brunch and private Mass*” at St. Augustine’s Friary on Sunday, October 8.

100% of the proceeds will be sent to our projects in Oaxaca, Mexico, where many families must get by on \$5 - \$7 per day. With great need comes great generosity. Family fun for a worthy cause! You can find more information and updates: [www.ole5k.com](http://www.ole5k.com)



*Doctor and nurse attending an elderly patient in need.*

**Planned Giving** – *Would you like to insure that TASH can continue to increase its impact?* A gift to TASH improves lives today and into the future. Behind every person served are loyal benefactors, like you, who make their care possible. Every time an individual enters the 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.

**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).



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