



# TASH TIMES

Vol 38 — May/June 2025. Oaxaca, Mexico.

www.tashinc.org

## ■ GREETINGS

Dear Friends:

I ended my last article with the line: **“You don’t stop laughing because you’ve grown old. You’ve grown old because you stopped laughing.”** I truly believe that a happy adult must have a sense of humor to be able to deal with the challenges of growing old. Someone once said that “Growing old is not for sissies.” I can tell you from personal experience that this is true. There are 30 friars where I live. Most of us are over 70 years old. **This June I will turn 82.**



*Héctor (profiled later in this newsletter) on his final day at La Clínica. He credits the hospital staff with saving his life.*

I am the one in our friary that is always telling jokes. Some laugh at the jokes and some groan. Their reaction tells me that they are still alive. When I was on the radio five days a week for 20 years, my program was called “Joyful Reflections.” I always ended my radio program with a joke.

During my early visits to Oaxaca, I learned the word **viejo**, which means old. So I started to use it when I talked about elderly people. A friend told me not to use **viejo** when speaking about the elderly. A better word to use was **anciano**. I asked what the difference was. She said **anciano**, which also means old, describes **an elderly person who is still growing**. **Viejo** just means old. Because of my age and where I live, I really appreciate the distinction.

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is wisdom. Wisdom has always been associated with the elderly. The idea is that after living many years, the elderly have learned many lessons, which makes them wise. However, it would be a mistake to believe that, just because a person is in their 80s or 90s, they necessarily have wisdom. **To really have wisdom, one needs a strong prayer life as well as life experience.** Without a strong prayer life, a person can begin to believe that his opinions are always right. A strong prayer life will keep a person humble.

There is a saying: **“Out of the mouths of babes.”** It means that someone, especially a child or inexperienced person, has said something surprisingly insightful or wise. It suggests that true wisdom or understanding can come from unexpected sources, even from those who might not be considered experts. My father left school in the fifth grade. He had little book knowledge, but he acquired a lot of wisdom as he grew older. He had lots of sayings that he would share with us frequently. When I would fight with my brothers, he would tell me: **“You can get more flies with a teaspoon of honey than you can get with a gallon of vinegar.”** I understood what he was saying, but I still wasn’t happy, because I was the middle son.

I enjoy reading the signs outside of Protestant churches. They often have clever sayings on them that are food for thought. Here are some of them:

1. When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you still trust the engineer.
2. Life begins at the end of your comfort zone.
3. If your glass looks half empty, pour it into a smaller glass.
4. They’re commandments, not suggestions.
5. Sometimes God will put a **Goliath** in your life so you can find the **David** within you.

*continued on next page*

*Father Scott, continued*

**During my first years in Oaxaca, I needed wisdom to deal with the many challenges I faced.** Not only because my co-founder left because of sickness, but also because of the many details I faced in approving the building of the **Clinica del Pueblo**. Money was being given by the benefactors here in the United States, so I needed wisdom to see it be used for the good of the poor. I kept asking whom I could trust to advise me, and God sent me the right people. Things became easier for me when I established a Board of Directors in the States.

I want to encourage all of you to pray daily for wisdom.

God bless you!

Fr. Scott

## ■ Friday with Edwin - by Charley B. Gates, MD

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together. - African Proverb

The movie **Miracle** (Walt Disney Pictures, 2004) details the journey of the 1980 United States men's hockey team that, against all odds, won a gold medal at the Winter Olympic Games in Lake Placid, NY.

The US team was composed of a geographically diverse mix of amateur players from various colleges selected after a series of tryouts. They had never played together before.

After a disappointing pre-season loss, Coach Herb Brooks made the team do extra calisthenics. After each repetition, he asked a player, **"Whom do you play for?"** Each time, the player answered by naming the college that he is attending. Finally, one player answered, **"I play for the United States of America."**

This idea that they were playing together for their country produced a powerful mindset shift that brought the players together as a team. Thereafter, propelled by this sense of unity, they began to overachieve. In the semifinal game, they defeated the heavily favored Soviet Union by scoring two third-period goals in a game that became known as the **"Miracle on Ice."** In the gold medal game, they defeated Finland. Both were come-from-behind wins.



*Edwin and his family warmly received me into their home, and Edwin shared the moving story of his surgery and his trip to France.*

During a visit to Oaxaca a few weeks ago in early March, I spent time with **Father Renteria**, the pastor of **Santa Cecelia Church**. TASH has enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship with this exceptional priest. Father Renteria has built a powerful team around him that has accomplished some amazing feats. Together, they are a testament to how much a team can accomplish.

Fifteen years ago, the neighborhood around Santa Cecelia was wracked by crime and illicit activities. To combat this, Father Renteria oversaw the construction of Santa Cecelia Church, an impressive structure with massive ceilings large enough to accommodate the entire neighborhood. TASH funded the cost of the construction. **The church created a sense of identity and cohesiveness** in the neighborhood that became a rallying point for the community.

This cohesiveness led to the opening of the **School of Music**, which was started to give students an after-school alternative to recruitment into illicit activities. Led by an energetic parent committee chosen by Father Renteria, the School of Music was so successful that it gave rise to what has become an internationally recognized youth symphony.

During my recent visit, we made a home visit to **Edwin Jesús Pacheco Chavez**, a 14-year-old violinist and a member of the youth symphony. Edwin plays the violin and practices for several hours per day. He lives with his grandparents and members of the extended family. His father migrated to the United States years ago and lost contact with the family. His mother was lost to substance abuse.

*continued on next page*

*Take the First Step!, continued*

Edwin was born with a defect that stunted the growth of his right leg, creating **a significant limb length discrepancy that obligates him to use crutches**. Edwin is currently undergoing treatment at Shriners Children's Hospital in Mexico City. His treatment to gradually lengthen the leg is ongoing and has required multiple surgeries.

**Two years ago, the youth symphony was invited to perform in France.** The trip was scheduled to take place just after one of Edwin's surgeries, which made his participation in the historic trip unlikely. His mobility would be severely restricted, he would still be dealing with significant post-operative pain, and he worried about being a burden to the group. Edwin gave up hope of making the trip.

**However, Edwin's fellow students refused to leave him behind.** They rallied around him. Despite their families' limited means, they pooled their resources to acquire the type of collapsible wheelchair that could be used in airports. They created a schedule for caring for Edwin during the trip; each took their turn, including pushing Edwin in his chair and attending to his post-operative needs.

Edwin beamed as he told me this story. He was stunned by the outpouring of support. He was able to make the historic trip, and **he played his violin on the world's stage**—wheelchair, knee brace, and all. Together, the students from the School of Music of Santa Cecilia had achieved the impossible.

Thank you for your continued financial support and prayers that enable TASH to continue to support projects like this that change the lives of Oaxacans like Edwin forever.

God love you.

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

## ■ Witness to Oaxaca – *The staff of La Clínica del Pueblo Saves a Life* - by Charley B. Gates, MD

Héctor J. was found on the streets of Oaxaca in August 2024, delirious and incoherent. Knowing nothing about his identity or medical history, one of the partner organizations that TASH works with brought him to the emergency room at La Clínica del Pueblo Hospital, Anna Seethaler.

**Héctor began to have a seizure in the waiting room**, prompting the staff of La Clínica to spring into action. After a battery of initial tests, they determined that he was most likely suffering from diabetic ketoacidosis, caused by a lack of insulin. The very high levels of sugar and acid byproducts in his blood were poisoning his internal organs. This situation was exacerbated by his dehydration and malnourishment. In addition, he had a fractured skull.

The doctors started two large-bore IVs and began resuscitation efforts. Héctor received IV insulin, fluids, and electrolytes to lower his blood sugars and reverse his dehydration. A surgeon was called to evaluate his skull fracture; it was determined to be non-operative.

The morning after his admission to La Clínica, **the mystery of his identity continued**. With very little to go on, the hospital social worker leveraged her network of connections and the power of social media to locate Héctor's sister, Lucía, who lives in Mexico City. She had lost contact with Héctor more than one month ago. **Lucía had feared the worst.**

Lucía explained that Héctor was a lifelong diabetic dependent on daily insulin injections. When he lost his job in Mexico City, he traveled to Oaxaca to pursue an offer of employment in the robust tourism industry. However, the promised job never materialized, and he was unable to find other work. **Héctor fell on hard times.** He began to skip meals to



*During my recent visit to Oaxaca, I spent time with Father Renteria and the leadership committee of the School of Music.*



*Héctor's reunion with his family accelerated his recovery.*

*continued on next page*



*Witness to Oaxaca, continued*

save money to maintain his supply of insulin. Then she lost contact with him. For almost two months, Lucía knew nothing of his whereabouts. Tears welled up in her eyes as she recalled the powerful moment when she was contacted by the hospital social worker. Héctor was alive, and he was in a safe place. She recalled that she fell to her knees and thanked God for saving her brother's life.

**Héctor's family took out a microloan to make the trip from Mexico City to Oaxaca** to support him in his recovery. The family reunion was a powerful one. They stayed on-site in the dormitories that La Clínica offers to out-of-town families. La Clínica also offers kitchen facilities, showers, and access to washing machines. It is part of the hospital's humanitarian commitment to the dignity of every patient. **No other hospital in Mexico supports patients and their families in this way.**

Gradually, Héctor improved. Surrounded by loved ones, his condition stabilized and his strength returned. Two weeks after his admission, Héctor walked out of La Clínica under his own power. Héctor's bill for the two-week hospital stay amounted to a little more than \$2,000 MXN pesos, or about \$100. This represents more than a 95% discount. **Héctor's care was subsidized entirely by TASH through the generous support of TASH's donors.**

No public hospital would have treated Héctor in the state in which he was found that fateful day in August. At that critical moment, his life hung in the balance, and there was only one hope for him—that he would somehow find his way to the only hospital in Oaxaca dedicated to serving the medical needs of the poor: La Clínica del Pueblo, Anna Seethaler.

**Doctor Marrissa**, the current executive director at La Clínica, is an inspiring and dynamic leader with a heart for the poor. She is fully committed to La Clínica's mission, and she played a large role in Héctor's recovery. She often quotes Saint Francis of Assisi: "Start by doing what is necessary, then do what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

At La Clínica, **the impossible happens almost daily.**



## FUTURE EVENTS & UPDATES

### Welcome Amanda Rampone, the new TASH Manager!



TASH is thrilled to welcome **Amanda Rampone** as the new Manager of TASH! Originally from Fort Worth, Texas, Amanda was raised in a home that valued hard work, faith, and service before self. As a first-generation Mexican American, she grew up actively involved in her church and community, which instilled in her a lifelong passion for helping others. **Amanda has built a career in leadership and operations**, successfully managing teams, streamlining processes, and fostering strong relationships within the organizations she serves. **Her deep cultural ties to Mexico** make her especially excited to contribute to TASH's mission. Having traveled to Mexico with her family since childhood and continuing that tradition with her husband and son, she has a strong personal appreciation for the communities we support. Amanda is a **dedicated wife and mother** who believes in leading with **integrity, purpose, and a commitment to service**. Please join us in welcoming Amanda to the TASH family!

The Ole 5k will take place on **October 4, 2025**. A private Mass, followed by brunch, will be held for Ole 5k sponsors on October 5 at the St. Augustine Friary in Lawrenceville. For more information, please visit: <https://tashinc.org/ole-5k/race-info/> !



**To make a donation, please make a check out to "Tash, Inc." and use the included donation envelope.**  
**To donate securely online, please visit: [www.tashinc.org](http://www.tashinc.org)**

**Transparency:** Visit [tashinc.org](http://tashinc.org) to learn how your donations support those in need in Oaxaca, Mexico.  
 Contact us at [admin@tashinc.org](mailto:admin@tashinc.org) with your questions.