



JOYFUL REFLECTIONS

Every person you help...makes ripples in society.

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TASHINC.ORG

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

Clinica Del Pueblo
"Anna Seethaler" A.C.
EST. 2000

GREETINGS

Dear Friends: Whenever I visited Oaxaca, I noticed how many **young adults didn't have jobs**. They seemed very disheartened and some left home looking for a job in Northern Mexico or in the United States. Those who stayed were often tempted to use drugs or join gangs. It is said that our youth are our future. The Mexican Government has done little to alleviate the problem of **unemployment among young adults**.

Working with young adults takes **patience and creativity**. When I have been at St. Cecelia's Parish and listened to their **youth orchestra**, I was impressed by their skills. Some were still in grade school. I was told that some of the youth knew nothing about music when they joined. After learning the fundamentals, they would be given an instrument to practice with, and with time they were able to use the instrument to make beautiful music.

It takes great discipline to learn to play a musical instrument well.

When I worked at Duquesne University, I was the director of three freshmen dorms. I had 18 resident assistants working in the dorms. My job included disciplining students who violated the rules. Most of the violations involved alcohol, fights, or curfew violations. The freshmen were away from home for the first time, and were enjoying their freedom. When caught violating a rule, they came before me. Some were **remorseful**, others **defiant**. I needed the **Wisdom of Solomon** in dealing with each student. After correcting a **remorseful** student, I never saw that student in my office again.

However, a **defiant** one would be in my office a number of times during the school year. They lacked discipline in their lives and did not do well in their studies.

As I grow older it is my hope that some of the **young people in the United States will help TASH with its mission** in Oaxaca. Recently some board members of TASH went to visit Oaxaca. One of the board, Charlie Baker, took his son, James, with him. I was eager to get James' impression when he got back, so I asked him to write his impressions for this newsletter. He wrote the following:

"My name is James Baker and I am a Senior at North Catholic High School. This past December I had the opportunity to travel to the City of Oaxaca in Mexico to see firsthand TASH's impact. I visited a few of TASH's partner organizations like Santa Cecelia's Armonia Music School, Canica de Oaxaca A.C., and of course, La Clinica Del Pueblo. Each of these organizations are made possible through a partnership between TASH donors and the people who work in Oaxaca.



Father Scott blesses a young child after Mass in Oaxaca.

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Fr. Scott message, continued

While visiting, I noticed one thing in common among all the people involved. Everyone had a smile on their face and a joyful attitude. This particularly amazed me because of the poverty in Oaxaca. I noticed how different life in Oaxaca is compared to what I am used to growing up in the United States. Despite the hardships, everyone I interacted with was happy and thankful. TASH is making an enormous impact in Oaxaca for these people. TASH is helping the poor in Oaxaca not just financially, but also with thoughts and prayers. I believe that the poor in Oaxaca know that there

are people in the United States, they have never met, who love and pray for them.”

Young people need heroes growing up. They have great enthusiasm for life. They want to do their share in making the world better. If adults would take the time and energy to mentor them, then they will be able to make a difference. Hopefully those of you who get the newsletter will encourage your young people to be involved with the mission of TASH.

God bless you! Fr. Scott



Board members and scholarship students conduct a robust round table discussion during a recent site visit.

Thank You

“If the only prayer that you ever said for the rest of your life was ‘thank you,’ it would be enough.”

**Meister Eckhart (c. 1260–1328),
German Catholic priest, theologian, and philosopher**

Gratitude is a feeling of thankfulness that recognizes the benefits and blessings that a particular situation or person offers. It can be a **momentary feeling** or an **enduring character trait**. At its highest level, gratitude encompasses not only the preferable things in life, such as health, wealth, and prosperity, but also the challenges in life, such as illness, suffering, and loneliness.

Suffering, when combined with gratitude, **offers the soul the opportunity to grow stronger** just as resistance exercises, when combined with adequate nutrition and recovery, offer the physical body the opportunity to grow stronger. Gratitude during moments of suffering

enables a person to find the silver lining in every situation and to embrace the lesson that it contains.

Gratitude has a lot to do with expectations. We are less grateful for things that we expect to happen; few of us are truly thankful that the sun came up this morning. The concept of **“hedonic adaptation”** explains this. Humans have a strong tendency to accustom themselves to the good things in their lives such that they no longer bring joy or pleasure. This decreases gratitude and creates an insatiable desire for more. Life can begin to feel like a treadmill; we are always active, always working, always reaching for more with no sense of contentment or peace.

There are many benefits to incorporating gratitude in your life, including the following:

- mental health gains (*shifts one’s focus from what is wrong to what is right*)

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Thank You, continued

- physical health gains (*improved sleep, stronger immunity to disease, fewer aches and pains and generally feeling of improved health*)
- stronger relationships (*thankfulness fortifies all relationships, romantic and platonic*)
- career satisfaction (*better professional cohesion with colleagues and improved performance*)

In December, I visited Oaxaca with TASH board members Charlie Baker and Duane Fahrion. We spent five days conducting in-person site visits to the various organizations that TASH supports. For me, one highlight was a **90-minute meeting that we conducted with twenty scholarship students** whom TASH supports.

The meeting took place at the School of Music at Santa Cecelia. After general introductions, we had a **robust discussion** about the areas of study that the students had chosen, their successes to date, challenges that they are facing, and their thoughts about the job market in Mexico. They spoke with **enthusiasm** about their area of study and their plans for their careers. They are talented, full of energy, and focused on their studies.

Without exception, **the students began their remarks by expressing their heartfelt thanks for the scholarship, which is in the process of transforming their lives.** Their gratitude was genuine and profound. It moved me. The students also uniformly expressed a sense of urgency - they value the opportunity that they have been given, and they are committed to making the most of it.

TASH is in its **fifth year** of scholarships and currently supports **thirty-four students**, ranging from middle school through university. Interestingly, a scholarship tends to impact the entire family, not just the scholarship student. Inspired by the success of the scholarship students, their siblings and parents often 'up their game,' working harder at their jobs and studies. Success is contagious. In this way, these scholarships are transforming entire households. What an impact!

I hope that I have been able to convey in some small measure the impact that your support is having in Oaxaca. I would also like to express **my deep and heart-felt gratitude** to you for your thoughts, prayers, and financial support of TASH. Without you, TASH could not operate.

God love you.

Charley B. Gates, MD

President, TASH Board of Directors

Capital Updates at La Clínica

By Charley B. Gates, MD

Change is in the air at La Clínica del Pueblo "Anna Seethaler," the hospital founded by Father Scott that remains the heart and soul of TASH's efforts in Oaxaca.

This year, La Clínica celebrated its **25th anniversary**. Since its founding in 2000, La Clínica has showed remarkable resilience, surviving leadership turnover, earthquakes, government inspections, and political turmoil.

La Clínica started as an outpatient dispensary, offering medications at a reasonable price to patients of limited resources. As Father Scott's fundraising efforts bore fruit, the **dispensary grew into a full-scale hospital** including an operating room, outpatient exam rooms, a dormitory for families of patients, and an emergency room that offers services 24 / 7 / 365.

These expansions have enabled La Clínica to positively impact the lives of many **thousands of patients**. Within its hallowed walls, the **blind** have recovered sight (cataract



Doctor Marissa (far right), executive director of La Clínica, led a tour of the newly renovated hospital operating theater. The architect (second from the left) was on hand to answer questions and provide context and details.

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Update, continued

surgery), the **lame** have regained mobility (orthopedic surgery), and **thousands of new lives** have entered the world (obstetrics). In addition, prevention campaigns launched by La Clínica have thwarted the devastating complications that diseases like diabetes and hypertension can wreak on a patient.

Despite these successes, challenges lay ahead. Specifically, La Clínica is beginning to show its age. Many of its facilities and equipment need updating.

In July of this year, La Clínica began a large capital project to remodel the operating room suite. An experienced architect was hired to oversee the project. During my recent visit in December, I had the opportunity to tour the updated OR suite. I was impressed by what I saw:

- the **electric system** has been completely updated, including the installation of a generator that will insulate La Clínica from blackouts
- **new ducts and HVAC equipment** have been installed that better control humidity and maintain an appropriate air temperature, lowering the risk of infection
- **structural changes** were implemented, including new rooms and new walls, that enhanced sterility and improved the flow of the patients, surgeons, and nurses
- **outpatient and inpatient services have been separated**, optimizing efficiency and sterility

After our tour, we met with the hospital leadership to review the progress and to discuss **other upcoming updates** that will be necessary to keep La Clínica viable to continue to offer first-class services to its patients. Some of these projects include the installation of an electronic medical record, renovation of the outpatient office exam rooms, and improvements to the emergency room.

Healthcare services in Mexico are in decline, and many hospitals are closing. This has to do with increased government regulation which is having the unintended effect of creating closures and thereby **exacerbating the shortage of quality healthcare in Mexico**. This makes the role that La Clínica plays even more important.

During my recent visit, I met a patient who has been a **patient of La Clínica since 2012**. With tears in her eyes, she described how, time and time again, the care that she has received at La Clínica has changed or improved her quality of life. **Her gratitude was profound and authentic.**

The capital investments that TASH and La Clínica are making will ensure that this level of service continues for years to come.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support!



Board members pose with La Clínica staff and leadership in front of a mural celebrating the 25th anniversary of the hospital.



Board members enjoyed a Christmas concert performed by members of the Santa Cecilia youth symphony orchestra.



To make a donation, please scan the QR code, give online at www.tashinc.org, or make a check out to "Tash, Inc." and use the included envelope.

SAVE THE DATE!!

The 18th Annual Olé 5k will take place on October 3, 2026.

TASH welcomes its newest Board Member: Deacon Rick Caruso!

He is honored to support TASH as a Board member, helping to promote and sustain the work being done in Oaxaca, bringing Jesus, 'with skin on', to those who are served.

