



January 10, 2024, Report from Oblate Youth Ministry in Tijuana.

“Juan believes he will be able to see when he gets his new eye.”



Juan, age 9, was playing with an older friend over New Years, when the accident happened. Juan’s mother, Monica, was indoors taking care of her 3-month-old baby. The friend had the idea of setting off a firework in a glass bottle. The shrapnel lodged in Juan’s leg, arm, belly, and eye. A neighbor helped transport Juan to the hospital since Juan’s family does not own a car. The doctor could not save the eye and it had to be amputated. Juan is home and his wounds are healing with the assistance of the parish medical team. Monica, age 30, has not wanted to tell Juan that he will never recover his eyesight in that eye. Juan asks when he will get his

eyepatch off, and his mother tells him that the doctor needs to make a new eye for him. So, Juan believes he will be able to see when he gets his new eye. She has sought the services of the parish psychology team as she struggles about how to explain things to her son such that he will have some hope. At this point she prays that a prosthetic eye can be obtained for her son, but at this point it is financially out of reach.

Monica and her family live in a very poor area in a cobbled together house, which is some 3 miles from main roads and services. Monica and her husband moved to Tijuana looking for work about 5 years ago. Juan’s father is a mechanic, but only gets work on the days his boss has need of an extra hand, so his income is very meager. Monica and her husband have no other family in Tijuana, which makes things tougher and lonelier. The three older children of the family are in the parish



catechism program, so Monica fortunately knew about the services available from the parish.

Juan has been willing to attend church but is too embarrassed with the patch over his eyes to go to school. Monica asks for prayers that someday medicine will be able to provide a functional prosthetic eye.

“The Oblates are seeking funds to cover the surgery that Efrain urgently needs.”



Efrain Rivera is a 76-year-old man who has diabetes and a large hernia in his abdomen. The hernia began five years ago when his wife developed Alzheimer's disease, and he became the sole caregiver. His wife relies on diapers and can hardly walk, requiring extensive assistance.

They reside in the Rojo Gomez community, the most impoverished part of Tijuana, where they've lived for fifteen years. Originally from Puebla, they moved to Tijuana, hoping to

find a better life there. Efrain found a sense of safety and belonging in Tijuana, and they chose to make it their home.

Efrain worked as a security guard for most of his life until he turned 70, after which he struggled to find employment. For the past six years, he has survived by collecting and burning trash for his neighbors. In areas where there is no trash collection, people generally must burn their trash. The bags are often heavy and must be drug to a safe place, so this aggravates Efrain's hernia condition.

The social outreach and medical teams have been assisting the family for three years with food baskets, diapers, and even a wheelchair. Recently, their daughter, Guillermina, moved back in with them. This development allowed Efrain some relief from the physical strain of caring for his wife.



Guillermina had been working the night shift in a factory, but it closed, leaving her unemployed. During a visit to deliver diapers and food, Guillermina bravely requested additional help, revealing the severity of her father's condition. Despite feeling embarrassed, Efrain accepted the additional assistance due to the intense pain he was experiencing.

Currently, the Oblates are seeking funds to cover the surgery that Efrain urgently needs. Despite encouraging him to stop working, he insists on continuing, realizing he is currently the sole provider in the household. While the social outreach team cannot commit to securing the funds for the surgery, they can at least guarantee

the provision of food and diapers, thanks to our donors.

“Feature student.”



My name is Carolina Contreras, and I am 18 years old and live in Tijuana. I am studying marketing at the Technological University of Tijuana. My family consists of my older brother, my mom, and me. A few months ago, my dad passed away from respiratory failure due to COVID-19.

My family is from Sinaloa and moved to Tijuana to search of better job opportunities. I have visited Sinaloa, and it is very beautiful. There are many interesting places to visit, and I have only had good experiences there.

One significant challenge I have faced is economic hardship. With my dad's passing, the support from my family is greatly diminished. My mom is now responsible for all

the household expenses, and I cannot help her much because most of my day is occupied by my classes. It had been challenging for me to pay my tuition.

One of my goals as a student is to learn other languages. Currently, I am studying English, and I feel that my English is getting pretty good. Something that would make me proud is being able to add more than 5 languages to my resume someday. Another goal I have is to continue maintaining my grades. Since middle school, I have never scored below a 9 (A- average), and I am proud of that. I have put a lot of effort into keeping my grades high. I enjoy seeing my mom's face when I show her my report card and seeing her joy.

I would like to study more than one career. I am very interested in fashion, and I believe that knowing about marketing, being proficient in English, and having a passion for business can open many doors. Perhaps, one day, I could open a boutique or even create my own clothing line.

I appreciate the opportunity of obtaining a scholarship. Many students have similar financial hardships. It is difficult and stressful to focus on studies when a person cannot find a job that fits your class schedule. I hope you consider me for this support, and hopefully I can reciprocate in some way.

Hello, dear friend!

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