

From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

On Ash Wednesday, we started Lent with a morning of reflection for staff, volunteers, and interns. The theme was Gratitude Through Lent. We are all well-aware of the state of the world right now. It directly impacts our work every day, and it can be overwhelming. We learned that practicing gratitude, of noticing the gifts in our daily lives and expressing thanks, will help our overall well-being. We decorated gratitude journals, experienced the Examen, and were invited to develop a practice of gratitude in Lent.

During our time of reflection, I felt incredible gratitude for this team we have built here at Taller de José. Each of them goes above and beyond for our clients. When problems arise, which they do, they come together to solve it. When there is something more that can be done, they offer to do it.

Recently, Joan, our 16-year and counting volunteer, had a client. Pedro was brought to TDJ by his friend, Roberto, who is a long-time TDJ client. Pedro needed some help with an issue with the IRS. Joan helped him set up his online profile. He, then, had to verify his identity through a video call. Joan sought the support of Jasmine, our Mission Advancement Coordinator, who dropped what she was doing to support Joan. Joan then waited with Pedro for over an hour for their turn with the IRS agent.

As they waited, Joan listened to Pedro's story. She learned about his health limitations and some struggles he'd been having with his former spouse and his inability to see his children.

The IRS agent came on the screen, but she could not hear them. She disconnected the call. Disheartened, Jasmine came in to problem-solve. They called the IRS again. They waited twenty minutes this time, and the same issue occurred. Jasmine got her laptop and called a third time. This time, the wait was only 10 minutes, the screen popped up, and they were able to prove Pedro's identity. Joan then helped Pedro with the next steps in the process.

The appointment took over three hours. Joan offered to Pedro that we could help him with his visitation issue. She took the time to set up another appointment for him to bring in his divorce paperwork. Pedro returned a few weeks later. Joan reviewed the paperwork and affirmed what she suspected; he did have visitation rights. She immediately set up an appointment with one of our community partners who help our clients with legal issues.

We are always looking for ways to make our clients' lives easier. And we don't give up easily – we will spend three hours figuring it out!

There is a lot of fear and anxiety in the community these days, so we are working hard to find ways to eliminate as much as we can. You will see we are piloting a satellite office in Little Village, and we will be piloting home visits for our most vulnerable clients. We will keep adapting so that we can help as many Pedros as we can.

We are grateful for you and all the ways you support us as we support our clients.

Ever Grateful,

Beth White
Executive Director