

Young Heart

There are times in my life slaps me in the face and puts me in my place. Such experiences open my eyes and I see the world as it is or should be. I had an experience that I would like to share.

My wife's parents live in Piedras Negras, Mexico, which is a border town with Eagle Pass, TX. We visit Piedras Negras often and frequently spend the weekends there. As some of you can imagine Mexico is not like America. It is common to see people of all ages begging. You find them on the streets, sidewalks, parking lots, plazas, and places you would not imagine.

One Saturday morning I decided to get my truck washed. I invited Sergio, one of my wife's nephews, to go with me. Sergio was about 5 years old at the time. Sergio and I arrived at the car wash and pulled into the washing area. We got out of the truck waited for the truck to be hand washed. We stood there looking at the truck when a little boy walked up to me. The little boy looked like he was about 6 or 7 years of age. It was cold that day, and he wore a raggedy old sweater and was bear-footed.

I visit Mexico frequently, in fact so frequent I got used to seeing poverty all around me. After a while, I started to ignore it, without realizing it. It is not that I stopped caring, for poor people, which are abundant in Mexico I became desensitized.

The bear-footed little boy looked at me and raised his hand. In his hand, he held a small cardboard box that looked like it was just about to fall apart, and in the box, he had some chewing gum. The little boy asked me if I wanted to buy some chewing gum. I told him I did not have any change and turned back to look at my truck being washed. A moment later, I felt a tug on my shirt again. The little boy raised the little cardboard box again and said that maybe my son might want some chewing gum. He was referring to Sergio my wife's nephew. I told him that I did not have any change, again turned my back on him, and looked at my truck again. After the truck was finished, Sergio and I walked to the cashier to pay for the car wash. Next, to the cashier, there was a coke machine and Sergio asked me if I would buy him a soda. The cokes were three pesos. I

reached into my pocket and pulled out two Mexican pesos. I told Sergio that I only had two pesos and that I would buy him a soda later.

I then left a tug on my shirt again. I turned around and looked down and there was that bear-footed little boy again. I thought he was going to ask me again if I would buy some chewing gum, but that was not the case.

The child raised his hand and showed me a Mexican peso. "Here mister so you can buy your boy a soda."

I could not believe it; I was stunned. That moment life slapped me awake, opened my eyes, and heart. The little boy offered me his hard-earned money, to buy Sergio a soda. I felt beyond shame.

I thanked him very much and told him to keep his hard-earned money. I gave him the two pesos I had. I would have given him more but only had large American currency.

I went back to my wife parent's house in a daze. I told my wife about the little boy. We both went back to the car wash and we found the little boy, on the sidewalk, in front of the car wash selling his chewing gum. My wife bought some chewing gum from the little boy, with a large bill, and told him to keep the change. I have not been able to stop thinking of the little boy. I hope the struggles of life do not corrupt his wonderful young heart.

Amilcar (Aumi) Hernandez

mystories@aumih.info