

Antonio Tizapa heads 'Running for Ayotzinapa 43', in search of his missing son



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Many years ago, Don Antonio Tizapa left behind his roots in Mexico in search of a better future for his family. His destination was New York, where he joined the statistics of well-qualified labor of Mexican origin in the United States.

His history was not very different from the rest of his compatriots that inhabit that territory. It was not until the night of September 26, 2014, when the news that came from the place where he was born, changed his life forever.

That night, his son, Jorge Antonio, and 42 other students from the Ayotzinapa Rural Normal School disappeared in an incident that continues to find no answers, but which Don Antonio does not forget and remembers in a way that has

an impact.

Don Antonio has always liked to run, he did it before emigrating to another country, he did it as a hobby and he has not stopped doing it, only now he has a different purpose: that the wound threatened by forgetting does not close.

This is how 'Running for Ayotzinapa 43' was born, a group of runners whose name does not require further explanation, but who is on the move in search of answers.

"It all started a few months after the disappearance of our children. My son is Jorge Antonio Tizapa and like most of us in another country, we come to earn a living for families. I have met few people who do it in a different way. We are economically displaced and you never expect something like this to happen. Before, there were not many ways to express ourselves, technology has been important for all of us parents who are in this," he shares in an interview with Universal Deportes.

He started running in 2010, he even took part in a marathon that took place in Ayotzinapa, he lived a kilometer from the rural school. There he did his social service, he knows each of its corners and many of his relatives studied in its classrooms. It has been a long time since he returned, perhaps it is pain that prevents him. "I started running for health, I did it for about four years in Mexico. Already in New York I got to know people and their racing experiences encouraged me to improve. In 2014 I was at a faster level because of training."

But Ayotzinapa arrived, a living memory that crowds his memory with sadness. "You are left without knowing what to do, I did not see how to get out of that great pressure that I was living. I was walking in the park and many things were going through my head. Sport gave me the strength to continue."

So, he printed his first shirt with the inscription 'Ayotzinapa 43,' which has passed through several hands, watering a seed of conscience. "I met more people and printed more T-shirts, of different colors in each race, according to where my colleagues came from. From Puebla, Veracruz, Mexico State and Texcoco."

His adventure partners (about 200) encouraged him to form a running club and after a few months they did. "But we needed a shirt, I had three colors in mind: white, blue and green. It didn't take me long to select green for our uniform, for what it represents, life and hope. Green for the color of the flag and of the dark turtles of Ayotzinapa." As slow as justice awaits.

Their allies on the trails are not activists, nor do they attend marches or protests, they like sport and carry this message, "...and from that they have known what we live. We do what our professional athletes do not do, speak out for the injustices that happen in Mexico and in other countries, many people have been in solidarity with our struggle."

It is true, they are not professionals but they are runners with a good heart. So

he doesn't ask for money or donations, and gives away the shirts. Sometimes people stop him on the street and give him a coin for a coffee or water, "They do it because they see you walk everywhere. Here we are 69 months away. It is a marathon in which we have many kilometers to go. We just want to know where our children are, everyone who commits a crime must pay."

Many would have given up, Tizapa remains standing by the affection and love for his son. "It is something that I do not wish on anyone, not even those guilty of this. I have not been to Mexico, I do not know how they live there. I have heard negative things but I prefer to see the positive things. I am not a leader or activist. I am a father who seeks to find his son, his companions and the thousands of disappeared in Mexico."

He admires all the New York runners and the club, which, having no connection to the disappeared, arose in the State of Mexico. "It is our great revolution of conscience and we carry that mentally while running. We are not only great people but also children who were born here, who are realizing everything. We are in more than 25 countries that are discovering what is happening in Mexico."

In the United States they often ask him why Mexicans are so 'crouched down.' "It is how they see us, as cowards. We are one hundred percent qualified workers but in situations of solidarity, very few. We are going to run until we find answers."

They have done it in the different counties of New York and this Sunday they will do it in the Bronx, with a five kilometer race. In August, it will be the turn of the children who are also part of 'Running for Ayotzinapa 43,' a group that runs in search of justice.

CORREN POR JUSTICIA

Antonio Tizapa encabeza 'Running for Ayotzinapa 43', en busca de su hijo desaparecido

GABRIEL CRUZ

Hace muchos años que Don Antonio Tizapa dejó atrás sus raíces en México en busca de un mejor futuro. Su destino fue Nueva York, donde se sumó a la estadística de mano de obra bien calificada de origen mexicano en Estados Unidos.

Su historia no era distinta al resto de sus compatriotas que habitan aquel territorio. No lo era hasta el 26 de septiembre del 2014, cuando una noticia que llegó desde el lugar que lo vio nacer, trastocó su vida para siempre.

Su hijo, Jorge Antonio, y otros 42 estudiantes de la Escuela Normal Rural de Ayotzinapa desaparecieron en un hecho que sigue sin encontrar respuestas, pero que Don Antonio no olvida.

A él, siempre le gustó correr, lo hacía desde antes de emigrar a otro país, lo hacía por pasatiempo y no lo ha dejado de hacer, solo que ahora tiene un propósito distinto: que no se cierre la herida acechada por el olvido.

Así fue como nació 'Running for Ayotzinapa 43', un grupo de corredores cuyo nombre no requiere mayor explicación, pero que aprieta el paso en busca de respuestas. "Todo empezó a los pocos meses de la desaparición de nuestros hijos. Somos desplazados económicos y nunca esperas que vaya a pasar algo así, es lamentable", comparte en entrevista con El Gráfico.

Él comenzó a correr en el 2010, incluso tomó parte de un maratón que se hacía en Ayotzinapa, vivía a un kilómetro de la escuela. Hace tiempo que no regresa, tal vez sea el dolor el que se lo impide. "En Nueva York fui conociendo personas y sus experiencias en las carreras me animaron, en el 2014 estaba en un nivel más rápido".

Pero llegó Ayotzinapa, un recuerdo vivo que se agolpa en su memoria con tristeza. "Te quedas sin saber qué hacer, no veía cómo salir de esa gran presión que vivía. El deporte me dio la fortaleza para seguir".

Así imprimió su primera playera con la leyenda 'Ayotzinapa 43', ya son más de 500 y sus compañeros lo animaron a formar un club de corredores. Necesitaban una playera y no tardó en seleccionar el color verde para su uniforme, "por lo que representa, la vida y la esperanza. A sesenta y nueve meses de distancia. Es un maratón en el que nos faltan muchos kilómetros. Solo queremos saber dónde están nuestros hijos, no soy activista ni líder, sólo un padre que quiere justicia".

