



TALLER SAN JOSE  
ST. JOSEPH'S WORKSHOP



## *Executive Biography*

### **SHAWNA SMITH** **CEO/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

For more than twelve years, Shawna Smith has worked with Taller San Jose to advance the lives of thousands of young men and women marginalized by the conditions of barrios into which they were born. Throughout her tenure at Taller San Jose, Shawna has led the development of numerous strategic initiatives including the launch of the construction training program, Taller Tech; which was integral to the development of the organization's existing model of workforce training. In 2005, Shawna was promoted to Associate Director; and in 2008, she took over the executive leadership reins, successfully managing the transition of the organization's founding director. Under Shawna's leadership, Taller San Jose continues to thrive.

Throughout her career, Shawna has brought a combination of good business sense and compassion for the poor to her work. In addition to her role as Executive Director, she has led the development of Hope Builders, Inc., a licensed general contracting venture and social enterprise that expands Taller San Jose's existing training services and creates jobs for unemployed youth.

She received her degree in English from Santa Clara University. As a young college graduate, Shawna spent her first year post graduation as a Jesuit Volunteer. During her year of volunteer service, Shawna lived and worked among the poor of Central Orange County, California, providing emergency assistance services to support families on the edge of homelessness. This experience marked a watershed moment in her life and resulted in her choice to work in the social service sector.

Shawna has worked in numerous capacities in the non-profit sector including as a board member, volunteer, and advisor in the areas of: workforce development, violence prevention, intervention, emergency assistance, homelessness, and volunteer service. Despite many accolades—she was named a Marano Fellow by the Aspen Institute in 2006 and was a finalist for the Cardinal Bernardin Award—she views the opportunity to lead Taller San Jose as a call to further service to the community in which she and her husband live and raise their family.

