

## Save the Date!

# 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary LIGHT up a LIFE

September 19, 2020

For more information about how to get involved, visit

[tsjhopebuilders.org/light-up-a-life](http://tsjhopebuilders.org/light-up-a-life)



# 34

SINCE NOVEMBER, YOU HELPED  
YOUNG PEOPLE START CAREERS

**YES,** I would like to give a gift that moves a young person from poverty to prosperity.

\$50 to help prepare a young person, like Priscilla, to enter the workforce

\$\_\_\_\_\_ to help as many young people like Priscilla as I can.

GIVE ONLINE TODAY:

[tsjhopebuilders.org/donate](http://tsjhopebuilders.org/donate)

Below are some of the young people who completed training and launched their employment at an average hourly wage of \$15.14

Name	Employer	Hourly Wage
Angel M.	Aire Rite	\$16.00
Carmen H.	Metadata, Inc.	\$15.00
Consuelo E.	Providence St Joseph Health	\$15.00
Dulce R.	Sand Canyon Urgent Care	\$16.00
Edgar P.	Mammoth Electric, Inc.	\$15.10
Emmanuel R.	Associated Gastroenterology Medical Group	\$15.00
Evelyn O.	MemorialCare Medical Group	\$16.32
Jocelyn R.	UCI Medical Center	\$16.83
Kevin F.	Sunwest Electric	\$15.00
Maria S.	Coastline Orthopaedic Associates	\$14.00
Maritza D.	Camino Health Center	\$15.00
Mele A.	MemorialCare Medical Group	\$16.50
Paulina H.	Regenerative Medical Group	\$15.50
Rogelio B.	True Vision Enterprises Inc	\$14.00
Ulysses C.	D&J Roofing	\$17.00

To see a list of supporters who have helped these youth find employment, visit [tsjhopebuilders.org/amigo](http://tsjhopebuilders.org/amigo)

# BUILDING HOPE

SPRING 2020



[tsjhopebuilders.org](http://tsjhopebuilders.org)

## A message from SHAWNA SMITH

Last week my 4th grader and I stopped to grab a quick breakfast on the way to school drop-off. He picked a neighborhood donut shop near our home in Yorba Linda that's always a beehive of activity in the morning. As we sat down, I noticed a familiar face walk into the shop. It had been at least 10, maybe 15 years, since I'd last seen him. Would he remember me? As I stood up to say hello, he immediately reached out his hand and said, "Hope Builders."

Raul looked like any other professional on his way to work via his kid's school that morning. As he updated me on his job with the County of Orange and his eldest son who is a sophomore at UC Santa Barbara, I flashed back to a young man with a tough glare and baggy pants. I could still see a resemblance to that younger man, but the transformation was unmistakable and profound. He introduced his kids, grabbed breakfast and offered, "you have my help anytime" as he went out the door.

This year Hope Builders celebrates its twenty fifth anniversary. It is amazing how 25 years can pass in the blink of an eye. What a gift it is to reflect on the thousands of Rauls heading to work, raising their families, sending their kids to college knowing Hope Builders was a critical turning point in all of it.

We have certainly not traveled this journey alone. You have been with us — encouraging, supporting and believing in the power of hope. It's what propels us forward, pushing us to dream about the next 25 years and what we can make possible for young people in Orange County.

The best is yet to come,

*Shawna Smith*  
Shawna Smith

## CELEBRATING 25 years OF HOPE

This year marks Hope Builders' 25th anniversary.

In 1992, Sr. Eileen McNerney, a Sister of St. Joseph of Orange, invited three other nuns to move with her to a gang-ridden neighborhood in Santa Ana, where gun shots and drug sales were commonplace. One hot summer evening, Sister Eileen listened helplessly as a piercing cry rang through her open windows; it was the agonizing wail of a mother who had just lost her second son to gang violence.

This moment marked a turning point for Sister Eileen. In 1995, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange opened an educational and job-training center in downtown Santa Ana for at-risk young adults ages 18 – 28. They named the center Taller San Jose — St. Joseph's Workshop — after St. Joseph, the patron saint of workers.

Now known as Hope Builders, the program operates in three locations in Santa Ana and Anaheim. Working to walk young adults out of poverty, today Hope Builders provides job training and support needed to launch careers in

construction, healthcare, business and information technology. Its early bench-making social enterprise laid the foundation for its current alternative staffing agency that fast-tracks youth to living-wage employment and generates revenue.

In 25 years, Hope Builders has empowered more than 6,000 young people with the skills needed to move from poverty

to prosperity. The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation recognized the agency as one of 13 promising practices across the nation and Deloitte estimates that Hope Builders' graduates contribute

close to \$1.3 million annually back to Orange County.

The one constant — every day motivated young people come through Hope Builders' doors seeking a better life.

Hope Builders remains the home of second chances. We continue to break the cycle of poverty. Hope is here to stay.

Moving forward, Hope Builders is working to ensure its model is sustainable, successful and scalable.

*Hope Builders  
remains the home of  
second chances.*

For monthly anniversary milestones and updates, visit

[tsjhopebuilders.org/25years](http://tsjhopebuilders.org/25years)

801 N. Broadway  
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[tsjhopebuilders.org](http://tsjhopebuilders.org)



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To volunteer, hire a graduate or make a gift, please contact  
[info@tsjhopebuilders.org](mailto:info@tsjhopebuilders.org)  
 or call (714) 543-5105

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# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

In honor of our 25th anniversary we've been reaching out to our many talented alumni for updates on how the skills training and support around life's challenges they received at Hope Builders has empowered them to thrive.

Before coming to Hope Builders, Priscilla was earning minimum-wage, then \$10 per hour, at her neighborhood video store. "I always wanted to work in an office. After high school I applied everywhere. They all said I needed more experience. I didn't know how to get the experience if I wasn't given a chance," Priscilla recalls.

"One day a customer at the video store encouraged me to apply to Hope Builders, then known as Taller San Jose. She said they helped her get a job. I thought it was too good to be true."

Priscilla, ready to change her life, applied. "Hope Builders taught me how to work in an office, use Microsoft Office and write a proper resume. It gave me the opportunity to do what I always wanted," Priscilla reflects.

After successfully completing the training program she was linked to an opening at the Orange County Community Foundation (OCCF).

"I wouldn't have made it through the interview process if Hope Builders hadn't prepared me. My first panel was three people and the second was five. I felt confident since I knew I possessed the skills they were looking for."

Nearly eight years ago, Priscilla joined the OCCF's team as the receptionist earning \$15.87 per hour. Her skills and work ethic impressed the team and she

was later offered the position of development assistant before moving on to the finance team where she now works as the finance & administration associate earning \$26 per hour.

Priscilla has also gotten married and started a family. She and her husband live on their own in a condo near South Coast Plaza.

As part of her day to day responsibilities Priscilla processes checks and online donations, enters gifts into the database, ensures timely thank you notes are sent out and takes meeting minutes. She's also required to regularly interact with the OCCF's donors, board of governors and advisors—the community's top business and community leaders—which she does with confidence.

Tracy Branson, chief financial officer at the OCCF, recently shared, "I have been so pleased to have Priscilla as part of the OCCF team. Priscilla is a dedicated employee who works hard and strives for accuracy which is really important for her role. She has been such a success I would utilize Hope Builders again to source an entry level candidate."

"Hope Builders gave me the extra push I needed," Priscilla recently

expressed. Because of you, our supporters, Priscilla developed the foundational tools and support she needed to build a prosperous life.

*To learn how you can hire a young person, like Priscilla, contact Lisa Guirguis at (714) 543-5105 ext. 128.*



A message from our founder  
*Sister Eileen McNerney*



*Sister Eileen and the late Sister Rebecca leading volunteers in improvements of our 801 N. Broadway headquarters in September 1995.*

It was May 1995 ... Finally, we had the keys to the building that was to become **Hope Builders**. It was an old building with very good bones, and definitely in the right location—the center of the vibrant city of Santa Ana—a safe neighborhood. I was living at that time with three other nuns in an area that was not so safe. In that dense neighborhood I had met many young men and women who had dropped out of school, become parents before they were ready, started using drugs as teens, got involved with a gang or spent time in jail. They were burdened with woes far too early in life.

These young people didn't laugh much, and they didn't talk about the future. I wouldn't have met them at all, if two years before, the Sisters of St. Joseph hadn't given me and my friends the blessing to move to our gang-ridden neighborhood.

It was Father Christopher Smith, however, who gave me the courage to envision a program like Hope Builders—a place where young people who were stuck and scared could find their way out of the dark. He was the pastor at St. Joseph's Church in Santa Ana at the time. He had blessed and buried enough young gang members to know the story far better than I.

So now, and for the past 25 years, with the generous support of you, our friends and donors, we've had the privilege of providing **workforce training, life skills** and **employment** to a never-ending line of young people who walk through our doors.

I knew that St. Joseph had long ago been named the "**patron saint of workers.**" For this reason, I entrusted our students to St. Joseph's watchful care. He was purported after all, to be a trustworthy and practical provider, a spouse and parent with his feet on the ground. St. Joseph also listened to God in his dreams. I wanted Hope Builders graduates to be able to dream also—to have hope for their futures.

Twenty-five years ago, I buried a medal of St Joseph in front of the building at 801 N. Broadway—for protection? ... for luck? ... for courage? All of these gifts have been delivered a hundred-fold.

**THANK YOU FOR BEING A PART OF THIS BLESSED JOURNEY!**

*For more information on other alumni, please visit*  
[tsjhopebuilders.org/25years](http://tsjhopebuilders.org/25years)