



Dear Friends,

This is a time of welcoming at Taller de José. In July, we welcomed two new Board Members – Paty and Raúl, and our new Board Chair, Roberto. And in August, we welcomed Sarai Torres, our new Receptionist, and six impressive interns and a just as impressive Amate Fellow to our team.

I sat with five of these new team members – Jeovana, Jocelyn, Lendzy, Mike, and Monica – and asked why they chose to spend the year ahead here at Taller de José.

They shared their desire to give back, to use their language skills to serve the Spanish-speaking community. They spoke of the uniqueness of Taller de José, how here they will learn a lot about different types of social work. And they talked about how working with various organizations and learning about the resources available will help them gain valuable skills and experience for their future careers.

Our hands-on approach to their learning was also a big draw. They are already working directly with clients after a few weeks of onboarding/training, shadowing, and being shadowed. Of course, they are not on their own. A few steps away, they have support to guide and answer their questions. We know the best way to learn is by doing and learning to ask questions to get to answers. This is a somewhat unique experience among their peers.

Towards the end of our conversation, they began to talk about another reason they chose TDJ. Yes, the ability to learn, to advance in their career, and the way we help form them, but there was something else. Through looking at our website and the interview process, they connected with our approach. The idea of accompanying clients, of caring for them and being on the journey with them, encouraged them to choose TDJ.

It is a joy to welcome these newest Compañera/os to the team. They come nervous and excited, uncertain and open. We know, of course, by the end of the semester, they will be much more confident. And by the end of their time with us, they will have been stretched and grown in ways they cannot even imagine.

That is one of the amazing gifts of Taller de José. Not only do we work directly to support our clients, but we also form our future leaders with compassion, empathy, and care. We accompany them every step of the way, hoping wherever they go, they will continue to accompany those around them.

Thank you for your support and encouragement in these challenging times!