

James J.C. Cavitt has dedicated his career to addressing educational disparities and inequalities among people directly impacted by mass incarceration. A tireless advocate for communities impacted by the criminal justice system and returning citizens. JC spent the last several years working at California State University Fullerton, Project Rebound, a program that supports the higher education and successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals.



Having spent over two decades of his life incarcerated, JC brings his firsthand experience with the criminal justice system and carceral education system to the California State University System. Much of JC's career has been dedicated to working with incarcerated trauma survivors and changing the narratives about incarcerated individuals.

JC is currently completing his Doctoral degree in Marriage and Family Therapy at Hope International University. Prior to this, he earned his master's degree in Social Work at California State University, Long Beach, in 2022. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology, with honors, from California State University, Fullerton, and his Associate of Arts degree from Mount Tamalpais College, in San Quentin. He is an Alpha Sigma Lambda honoree, Bickerstaff Graduate Fellow, and a Golden Key Honor Society member. Beyond his education, is the heart of a volunteer, mediator, social justice advocate, and therapist.

JC has been featured in numerous publications, articles, podcasts, and on various media platforms; including a TED Talk with John Legend, TEDx: San Quentin, Now This News, Post-Traumatic Thriving TV series, and CORE IQ educational training videos.

When people experience trauma or severe life stressors, it is not uncommon for their lives to unravel. JC's greatest passion is to help people, make a difference in the world and help change lives for the better.

Thanks so much for selecting me to be one of the 10,000 Degrees Scholarship recipients of 2022.

I feel so privileged and humbled to have received this award, which will help me to achieve my educational goal of getting my Ph.D.

It was only in 2015, that I graduated from Patten University, (I'm still getting used to calling it Mount Tamalpais College).

I recall having a conversation with Jody while I was still inside. We were standing outside of the trailer on the ramp near San Quentin news. I had written a term paper entitled, "Who's Parenting the Foster Care System," After we had finished discussing my paper, she said, you should get a Ph.D.

I laughed as if she had told a joke. She wasn't laughing...she looked me dead in the eyes and said, "I'm not joking! I'm serious! You should get your Ph.D."

Now here I am, having only been released in April 2017, I've earned a bachelor's degree with high honors from CAL State Fullerton, a master's degree in Social Work from Cal State Long Beach and now, I am proud to say, that I am a doctoral student getting my doctorate in Marriage and Family Therapy from Hope International University.

Jody, thank you for always encouraging, challenging, and sometimes even pushing us—your students, to embrace education. I have learned, education truly is a vehicle that has the power to take you anywhere you want to go. Today, I continue to build upon the educational foundation that I received while in SQ.

I now serve as Program Director for Project Rebound at Cal State Fullerton. Our mission is to support higher education and the successful reintegration of the formerly incarcerated.

I have spoken at conferences across the country and to elected officials up and down the State of California about the need for and importance of higher education in prisons.

My hope is that every Prison in CA will have a face-to-face, accredited college program. And for my brothers and sisters on the inside to take full advantage of the educational opportunities that are literally at their doorstep