

TamGram

Fall 2022
TamGram

Dear MTC Students,

At the close of 2022, I want to express my true gratitude to our entire student body for your extraordinary, admirable perseverance. I know how hard all of our students work to make it to class, to get coursework done, and to stay focused, in the face of quarantines, movement issues, the effects of long COVID, and so many more obstacles. After over seven years with the college, my initial impression remains, that our students are some of the finest and hardest working people I've encountered in my career as an educator.

I know the last years have been incredibly difficult, so my sincere thanks go to all of you for your persistence and faith in MTC! Here's to a strong finish to a difficult year, and hope for the year ahead, in which we have a lot of exciting plans for strengthening the way we serve our students. My very best wishes to all of you, wherever you are on your path at MTC.

Amy Jamgochian
Chief Academic Officer



OPEN MIC

The 2022 Open Mic event was held in Chapel B on Tuesday, December 20, at 5:15-8pm. Students had the opportunity to share creative work that they developed in class or on their own, such as poetry, dance, short stories, music, and comedy. This is one of our favorite events at San Quentin, and we were excited to see you all there after a two-year hiatus! For those of you who could not attend, SQTV recorded the event.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

After experiencing another semester of frequent quarantines, MTC will have only two semesters in 2023. While we will aim to end classes in 13 weeks each semester, this structure allows us to extend Spring and/or Fall by 5 weeks if we need to do so due to unexpected cancellations or delays. If classes can end in their usual 13 weeks, we have exciting plans for Enrichment Sessions in June and July — refresher courses, conferences, the options are many!

NEW STAFF

We're delighted to introduce Baby Asa as the new edition to the Mount Tamalpais College family. Baby Asa is joined by: Neela B. Gentile, Chief Advancement Officer, Frances Santiago, Learning Specialist, Astrid Hoover-Batt, Research and Evaluation Associate, Ali Bond, Humanities and Social Sciences Program Director, Nandita Dinesh, Senior Academic Program Director, Bekki Lee-Wendt, Executive Assistant, Sarah Manley, Academic Affairs Administrator, Zaw Min Htet, Math Program Director, and Carson Temple, Development Associate. Their wealth of knowledge and experience will be invaluable to our family and to the services of our community. You can find photos of the new staff inside this newsletter. Say hello if you see them around!

SPRING SEMESTER 2023

This Spring semester, The Writing Space, a study group for writing will begin with all tutoring/SLC activities in the second week of the semester. All students are welcome to drop in on Sundays from 3:00-5:00 pm and Wednesdays from 6:00-8:00 pm in B3. At 'The Writing Space' you can: work independently in a quiet space, receive writing support for school assignments and essays from a writing instructor/tutor, collaborate with peer mentors, and improve reading, writing, and language skills. Feel free to drop by and learn.

MOUNT TAMALPAIS COLLEGE: IN THE COMMUNITY

Sit Down with Jason Green and Vaughn Miles

What does it take to build a healthy community? We've been exploring this question by interviewing former MTC students who are contributing to their communities in a variety of ways. This is the beginning of a series we're calling In the Community.

Vaughn Miles and Jason Green are from Richmond and are now back in the community they recognize so well. Both Vaughn and Jason work for the City of Richmond Office of Neighborhood and Safety as mentors serving at-risk youth. We spoke to them to learn more.

"Growing up, it was fun," said Vaughn. "We rode our bikes all over Richmond. We used to run our dogs, I used to be



Vaughn Miles in Sacramento, State Capital

into pit bulls. I'd run my dog from one side of Richmond to the other side of Richmond. Those are the good times."

Jason Green said, "Growing up without a lot of money, and when the crack era started, I actually started selling drugs to pay my football fee." Growing up in rough neighborhoods, Vaughn and Jason adapted to their culture. However, consequences came with just navigating their environment.

Said Vaughn, "I did robberies and then slowed down the robberies and started selling drugs. School.... I didn't want to be there. I already know when I go there all I'm going to do is get teased. You don't have lunch

money. I don't like going to the free lunch line."

Jason said, "[On the streets] you ran into money you never had before. You could buy things you never had before. And just our culture turning, being so materialistic from slavery and all that, we looked at each other's value as what do you have?" Jason explained.

Jason and Vaughn were both at San Quentin at the same time. Both of them facilitated and graduated from many self-help groups, and took courses at Mt. Tam College.

"I got my GED when I was in there and I fought to get that," said Vaughn. "I had to take the test a few times. And then when I got that out of the

"Take full advantage of that education. Take full advantage of the people that are pouring into you, the programs"

way, now I wanted to go see what this college was about. College was helpful in a lot of ways...it started slowly building my confidence up, and then the staff, man they went all out the way to help you. It was nobody looking down on you or making you feel stupid because you didn't know something. You could have asked them the stupidest stuff and they sat there and broke it down with the purest of heart for you."

"Sitting inside them classes and getting help, and the people...that's what helped transform me out of my state of mind," said Vaughn. "When I stepped into that field of giving back, that became my desire."

This "desire" is a lifestyle now. Vaughn and Jason do gun violence prevention and conflict mediation.

"And our thing is to get in between it," Jason said. "And so, as I say, getting in between it is standing on street corners. It's risking our lives. ...we stand on street corners just to give them something, give them some



Jason Green at home in Richmond

knowledge, the wisdom of the day. Anytime we see them out. Maybe some resonates. Sometimes we say something, we drive away and they don't take heed, and they're dead."

Both Jason and Vaughn understand what it takes to build a healthy community. "We take these youngsters out to see things that they can aspire to be. Things that they don't see in their neighborhood. And a lot of times just to relax," said Jason. However, both also understand that change doesn't happen in one day. "Take your life seriously man. Take full advantage of that education. Take full advantage of the people that are pouring into you, the programs," Vaughn stresses. "Be serious about the man that you want to become. Not for the board, not for no female, not for nobody, but because you want to be a good person man."

Having the strength to be accountable and help build the same community you've damaged is the definition of making amends. Jason and Vaughn are both true hidden gems that lead by example.

Vaughn said "Do whatever you doing from the purest heart and with the best intentions man, and you will be fine. I don't care if you are struggling in a certain area, you're not as smart as somebody in a certain area. Be pure-hearted and have the best of intentions and you're going to get far."

ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



This year, MTC launched a new Alumni Scholarship program to support former students who are continuing their education. We're looking forward to growing this program in the years to come! Here are this year's scholarship recipients:

Somdeng Danny Thongsy is a first generation college student at UC Berkeley majoring in Sociology. He spent 20 years incarcerated and is now community advocate fighting for criminal justice reform and immigrant rights. Danny will now get the opportunity to spend time outdoors, camping, coastal foraging, drawing, writing poetry, teaching origami, and cooking traditional Thai/Lao culture food.

"I am honored to be a recipient of the MTC scholarship. I believe this is a very important scholarship that can help formerly incarcerated and low income people."

Chan John Lam is a first-generation Chinese-American, born and raised in Sacramento, California. At the age of 17, he was sentenced to serve 26 years-to-life. After 14 years of incarceration, his life sentence was commuted by Governor Brown. In 2019, he was paroled.

He is currently an undergraduate at UC Berkeley majoring in Political Science and attributes his success in getting into Cal to MTC, which taught him critical thinking skills, reading, and writing - importantly, instilling a sense of belief he is good enough.

He currently works as a Community Engagement Fellow at the Possibility Lab at the Goldman School of Public Policy at UC Berkeley conducting research and assisting voter registration at the Santa Rita county jail.

James JC 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 Project Rebound, a program that supports the higher education and successful reintegration of formerly 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 Cal State Long Beach in 2022. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology, with honors, from Cal State Fullerton and his Associate of Arts degree from Mount Tamalpais College.

MEET THE NEW MTC STAFF



Carson Temple



Frances Santiago



Bekki Lee-Wendt



Nandita Dinesh



Ali Bond



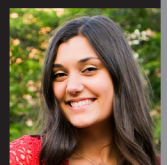
Zaw Min Htet



Sarah Manley



Neela Gentile



Astrid Hoover-Batt

MTC HOLIDAY PARTY!

Our recent Mt. Tam College faculty appreciation party was a wonderful event. The life-changing effects of education and growth formed within this community are awe-inspiring and worthy of celebration. We were thinking of you all! Enjoy a few photos and familiar faces.



SEEKING STUDENT SUBMISSIONS:

MTC is seeking to build a portfolio with creative artwork from students to share with our community in newsletters like this one, on our website, and in print materials. We know that there's tremendous artistic talent among our students, and we want to showcase it!

Submissions can be illustrations or any other kind of artwork on paper. Please do not submit any images that would not be appropriate for all audiences. We will not be able to use all artwork that is submitted, but we will scan your work and return the original to you. If we do decide to publish your work, we will ask that you sign a release form granting MTC the right to do so.

Please drop off your submissions at the Education Building, Attn: Bonaru Richardson, Mount Tamalpais College.

MTC NEWSLETTER

FALL 2022

