

00;00;00;00 - 00;00;06;01

Unknown

Collect call from Phiengchai

00;00;06;05 - 00;00;09;16

Unknown

How does access to education.

00;00;09;16 - 00;00;17;16

Unknown

Change your identity or influence identity within your sphere of experience?

00;00;17;16 - 00;00;19;21

Unknown

I would like to say is that

00;00;19;21 - 00;00;20;22

Unknown

is. instead of being confronted with my circumstances,

00;00;22;18 - 00;00;23;21

Unknown

or

00;00;23;21 - 00;00;38;12

Unknown

give it up and take the easy way out. When you're in the hard situation that we're in. I'm choosing to make the most of my opportunity. The more difficult my circumstances, the more me because there's an opportunity

00;00;38;12 - 00;00;47;07

Unknown

It gives me the chance to deal with the issues that brought me to prison and improvement, of course, mentally, physically and spiritually.

00;00;47;07 - 00;01;19;20

Unknown

I have never given up on my motivation for hope or transformation and continue to strive for that future. I've learned that higher education in prison is as essential to my life as air and water. It does so much more than teach me facts and figures. It builds self esteem because of study. It creates hope when there was not a hint of hope and opens doors in life that were once closed.

00;01;19;23 - 00;01;41;09

Unknown

I look at it this way. I just like when I think about - every time I think about education. I just feel so grateful because I'm afforded opportunity for chances to not returning to prison, others can avoid catching the same road that I have.

00;01;41;09 - 00;01;44;20

Unknown

a pivotal part of my life.

00;01;44;20 - 00;01;47;06

Unknown

Well thanks Phiengchai for sharing.

00;01;47;06 - 00;02;13;08

Unknown

I think I've told you, you know, during our visits, I was the first in my family to get a college degree and my, my degree was in, education and language arts. So I was a teacher in the, in the first career I had was as a teacher. And now in later life, you know, I belong to an organization that raises money for women's education.

00;02;13;10 - 00;02;45;17

Unknown

So the fact that you've been able to get, an education and continue to be curious and wanting to learn, you know, in your situation, you know, being incarcerated and, you know, I love that. And I love our conversations and the fact that you continue to want to learn and do and be involved and make changes and make political waves and, just everything you do, I think is just is remarkable.

00;02;45;19 - 00;02;53;25

Unknown

And, you know, I am so happy that I get to be a part of your journey.

00;02;53;28 - 00;03;21;08

Unknown

I'm so grateful, Bonnie, that you're a part of my life, you know, and, everything that I've gone ahead and I've prayed. I thank G-d for all the blessings that he's bestowed upon my life. And I think about all the wonderful people, wonderful things that you've got that shows, you know, bringing you, bringing Liz and just giving that to me, that, you know, vacations, my family, friends and loved ones is such a blessing.

00;03;21;10 - 00;03;48;12

Unknown

And I'll never forget it as I was being incarcerated in here. It's hard to drive because we're away from my family, friends and our loved ones, but at the same time also gave me so many

wonderful people in here. And this is where Annette lives. And I'm just like, to bide by the engines of my life and I think about, I'm like, she's family.

00;03;48;14 - 00;03;59;07

Unknown

I just feel so embedded in such a way she's so supportive that support and I think, as you know, I'm not just a prisoner

00;03;59;07 - 00;04;19;16

Unknown

I don't know what life has in store for me outside of these confined walls, but I just know that like in the practice of being incarcerated. I just there's so much for just to educate myself and broaden my horizons.

00;04;19;16 - 00;04;42;29

Unknown

And I it opened my mind up in such a way. I just it's so hard to even explain it because I don't have to sit in a small little room. I don't even know how big this wall is in my cell. Not just be locked up. Locked up, or locked in. My mind doesn't have to be closed off.

00;04;42;29 - 00;05;03;26

Unknown

I don't have to be one of those small minded person. I'm open to so many different things in here and and educated to me equals a whole less judgmental toward others and towards my surroundings. It's turning a negative into a positive. I've been incarcerated

00;05;03;26 - 00;05;11;15

Unknown

seeking out education. Like, I feel like I'm an example to others from similar circumstances proving that there's still hope

00;05;11;15 - 00;05;13;12

Unknown

on the horizon.

00;05;13;15 - 00;05;56;27

Unknown

Education gives me hope for the future, for being able to better myself, sure it's pertinent in showing society the benefits of a liberatory education is possibilities to create for a better tomorrow. Wouldn't you agree Bonnie? I do, I do. And, you know, I think the the most valuable tool you have at your disposal, probably even before you started getting more of a formal education, is your curiosity and your, willingness to engage with people and with ideas, because no matter, you know how booksmart people get, there's, you know, you find yourself in different situations.

00;05;56;28 - 00;06;33;04

Unknown

You you've got to learn to navigate. Regardless, you know, and obviously you find yourself in a very different situation and from, from me, my day to day life is certainly different from yours. And, I, you know, I would certainly look forward to helping you navigate from one world to the next, because there are things you can't learn, you know, from a book when it comes to, changing your environment, changing your culture, you know, moving from one situation to another.

00;06;33;07 - 00;07;01;07

Unknown

So, yeah, being curious, being open and, you know, trying not to let fear get in the way when when you're faced with change, you know, all of that is part of the a bigger, the bigger picture of what it means to be educated. Yeah. I mean I am in total agreement. Yes, the book teaches me so many wonderful things and some of that, but at the same time it's like you need to have that

00;07;01;07 - 00;07;33;00

Unknown

hands-on for learning, that's why I was going to, you know, I look towards Elizabeth and I look towards you for guidance as well. Like, there's so many things I'm just, like so clueless about. After being incarcerated for 17 years and like, wow, you would think that, you know, people could, you know, they think that, oh, when they hear, oh, this person has been incarcerated for like myself for 17 years, she must be institutionalized.

00;07;33;02 - 00;07;52;26

Unknown

And I feel like there's certain things I feel like I am. I really am like no I'm not! I'm not going to let this case close my mind off. Even, like when it comes to cooking. Bonnie, like I want to make manicotti. I'm going to make manicotti! I'm just going to reach for the stars and go above and beyond.

00;07;52;26 - 00;07;53;17

Unknown

Right?

00;07;53;17 - 00;08;16;16

Unknown

Lots of time at night, I'll lay in bed and think about how can I make truffles, how can I make this? How can I make that? I look like I want my mind to be limited you know, the things that I, I can't. You have blown my mind, girl. With like, you know, both you and Liz have blown my mind with what you can do with the microwave.

00;08;16;19 - 00;08;52;26

Unknown

I mean, I am not a cook and any stretch of the imagination, and I use the microwave all the time, but I have yet to make a chicken pot pie in a plastic bag and a microwave, you know, or pies or cakes or anything. Wonderful. So, I mean, you have had to be creative and imaginative and collaborative. You know, everybody pulling together with what an ever ingredients you can find to create, you know, your own version of the world, you know, in especially in terms of food.

00;08;52;28 - 00;09;10;01

Unknown

So I just I admire that so much because that is so outside of of my scope of thinking and being. So, you know, it's just a different world. So we're, you know, we're learning to, to navigate one another's worlds.

00;09;10;01 - 00;09;30;15

Unknown

So I know that you and me, Phiengchai, we met while we were incarcerated and we were in classes together. And because I can't come see you because of policy and procedure, Bonnie, who used to come visit me now, visits you. And you guys have your own relationship that's outside of our relationship. How do you think that,

00;09;30;15 - 00;09;36;05

Unknown

those experiences that we had in the classroom contributed to,

00;09;36;05 - 00;09;42;09

Unknown

our relationship, but also like this second generation relationship that you have with Bonnie.

00;09;42;29 - 00;09;43;11

Unknown

Well,

00;09;43;11 - 00;09;55;01

Unknown

we met in here, that's a blessing in itself. So is that how y'all G-D worked it all out. And prior to us, meeting all that was the education.

00;09;55;01 - 00;10;02;28

Unknown

For a while ago, like, there was only TCC. TCC's thing was - TCC is Tacoma Community College.

00;10;02;28 - 00;10;07;27

Unknown

Their thing was we have to have seven days or less to take classes, and I tried to apply to a job thing.

00;10;07;27 - 00;10;28;27

Unknown

And they were like - no, you can't, because your sentence is life without the possibility of parole. You. There's nothing like that for you. And I used to cry my eyes out and I used to pray about it. I was like, why? I want to educate myself. So to have a better tomorrow, why is there, you know, like, stumps on the road and I was just like, fine, it's okay.

00;10;28;27 - 00;11;01;08

Unknown

Because today's no is a greater yes that I think that God has in store, you know, for me, that's what my mentality was that time. And it still is. So, thinking like, for me, the idea of community, my idea of community is having a network of individuals, right, with varying strengths and talents working together to make life a better experience for everyone is specifically Freedom Education Project at Puget Sound.

00;11;01;10 - 00;11;16;29

Unknown

It's my home away from home at some point, Washington Correctional Center for Women, WCCW, went from a prison to a university. The classroom, we all rallied against stereotypes of who we are

00;11;16;29 - 00;11;58;23

Unknown

and who others perceive us to be. Stereotypes are always incomplete because we're so much more than the story, more than incarcerated individuals, and they're not defined by, or limited, to being those people. The program has challenged and empowered countless people to put this script, a personal narrative, that is stepping out and away from bring judgmental, toward a sense of freedom through higher education, we become scholars, begin to use critical thinking skills with a more, well informed sense of engagement. Our community here at WCCW and our

00;11;58;23 - 00;12;07;25

Unknown

community has accomplished unspoken skills gap what's going on within these confined walls in the classroom.

00;12;07;25 - 00;12;12;02

Unknown

how do you feel personally about now having access?

00;12;12;02 - 00;12;16;16

Unknown

I feel amazing, like, from someone who felt like.

00;12;16;16 - 00;12;29;23

Unknown

I felt in that sense when I was told no, I felt like a loser. Someone who was just pushed away because I was looked at as the worst thing ever that I could have done. That I couldn't even have access

00;12;29;23 - 00;12;36;01

Unknown

in a classroom where I can educate myself now, like I've gotten the opportunity.

00;12;36;07 - 00;12;44;19

Unknown

But I feel like I stand before, like, let's just say my parents, you know, like a new woman - mature, considerate. I'm involved in

00;12;44;19 - 00;12;51;02

Unknown

my society and have the ways in order to work towards enriching the lives of those around me.

00;12;51;02 - 00;13;02;27

Unknown

like my eyes spark. I can it's just like it's given me so much hope.

00;13;02;27 - 00;13;10;13

Unknown

Bonnie, you said earlier that you were first generation in our family to to get a degree.

00;13;10;15 - 00;13;16;22

Unknown

Do you think that that changed your relationship with the family or with people around you?

00;13;16;22 - 00;13;41;12

Unknown

Well, it did, because. Well, I know from my my parents, it gave them a a sense of pride and yet, interestingly enough, my younger brother, who's 12 years younger than I am, did not go to college. And it's only been in recent years, I've found out from him that he always felt that I was the favored one.

00;13;41;12 - 00;14;07;03

Unknown

I was the one that got all the opportunities, that I was somehow the princess in the group, you know, and I hadn't really appreciated, you know, how how he felt about that or even knew how

he felt about that, even though he had his own successes in life, regardless of having a college degree. And, you know, certainly gave me opportunities I would not have had otherwise.

00;14;07;03 - 00;14;40;14

Unknown

And I eventually ended up getting a master's degree that gave me better job opportunities that I that I would not have had. So, yeah, I'm a great appreciator of education and the the doors that it can open and the, you know, I think there's just more it was easier for me. Now, in this day and age, today, you know, I think a lot of folks are getting technical degrees or two year degrees or apprenticeships or trades, you know, trades, which are so valuable.

00;14;40;17 - 00;15;07;07

Unknown

And, you know, people are questioning really I think today the value of education given what it costs. So, you know, for Phiengchai and others, you know, in prison, and I understand there was some controversy about that too., when you're unable to get a degree and not have to pay thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars for it, you know, is there is that unfair?

00;15;07;10 - 00;15;27;15

Unknown

As important as it is to self esteem and what it what your life holds in the future and how that might help you. I understand, you know, that there's been pushback against that, too, because, you know, all of a sudden you're getting something for free that other people have had to pay for. But I certainly support that.

00;15;27;15 - 00;15;52;21

Unknown

I support that because my understanding, too, is that, you know, it it helps you see the world in a different light. In other words, not getting bogged down with just the minutia of what's going on day to day. The gossip or the anger or the, you know, the infighting that might be going on. It gives you something else to talk about, to think about, I know.

00;15;52;21 - 00;15;55;14

Unknown

Did you find that true? Absolutely.

00;15;55;23 - 00;16;24;29

Unknown

Yes, absolutely. You know, like, what I wanted to add on to earlier was that, that's giving me hope. And seeing the world in a different viewpoint. Right? Especially, you know, my scenario, instead of just being down and being disgruntled, you know, and all because I felt like I was standing in a mountain. You heard of that thing called a vantage point, right?

00;16;25;01 - 00;16;45;08

Unknown

I felt like I was standing in the vantage point where I wasn't, I was vanished, no one could see me. No one was offering me a place where I can advocate my my heart, my mind, my body, my soul, where I can learn to better myself. And given that opportunity to grow my mind.

00;16;45;08 - 00;16;58;25

Unknown

So if somebody came to you and said there's no point in giving someone access to education, who has a life sentence, what would be your argument?

00;16;58;25 - 00;17;04;24

Unknown

About why it should still be allowed regardless of the length of their sentence?

00;17;04;24 - 00;17;11;11

Unknown

Well, and I'm not an incarcerated individual, so I'm not going to have a passion around the answer.

00;17;11;11 - 00;17;42;23

Unknown

Probably that Phiengchai would have, but as far as I'm concerned, anyone and everyone should have access to education. And, you know, and learning because because I think, as Phiengchai pointed out, you don't you don't live within four concrete walls. We all live within. And perform according to how we think, believe. And then that's what leads to behavior.

00;17;42;26 - 00;18;15;06

Unknown

So if you can influence your thinking in a positive way, or if you can broaden your horizons, you know it does free you. It does free you from any kind of perceived or real prison. So, yeah, I'm, you know, I'm the eternal optimist. I, you know, I would wish the best for anyone and everyone. But again, you know, I've never been incarcerated, so I don't have, you know, that same perspective of how important it is.

00;18;15;09 - 00;18;18;22

Unknown

Whereas Pyong, she's been there, done that.

00;18;18;22 - 00;18;32;21

Unknown

You know, Aunt Bonnie, I was going to say if somebody came and approached me and was like, I think prison time. But I don't want to, like, do anything. I want to get out. I just want to if anything, I'll go to work because that's my livelihood.

00;18;32;23 - 00;19;09;05

Unknown

And that's that. And I'm just going to ride out this 20, 30 year by doing nothing. I'm going to work, coming back and just watching TV. Who cares? Who gives a crap, right? I didn't say I don't say no. Understood. I understood. I know that prison crushes you and it's dark, claustrophobic, and suffocating. I have to tell you from my experience that when I did survive, I thought I was being entombed. It was hard for me to put the words

00;19;09;07 - 00;19;49;11

Unknown

positive and prison in the same sentence. Yet when I reflect upon my time working towards, working towards my degrees here at WCCW, I found that confinement and optimism can be intertwined and coexist as a perspective. Being a student has helped me pierce cracks in the wall. It has shown me a light amidst bleakness, it provided air to feed my spiritual breath. I believe education can get it out through an electrical outlet and that's the cord that I used to access knowledge.

00;19;49;13 - 00;20;33;21

Unknown

The outlet equals admission. And, we exhibit our map is through our power that we have gathered by taking charge of our own story. I say our because I'm speaking for everyone, for the people in these confined, closed walls who has reached out. I just I aspire to continue to try to climb as high as they can dream. And so, you know, to carry on this program at WCCW has given the congresswoman and nine other individuals opportunity to rewrite history as giving us

00;20;33;26 - 00;21;08;04

Unknown

the ability to step out from behind the mental stereotypes, guidance and freedom and knowledge even, it's done so that never we leave the prison, it allows myself to be scholars and critical thinkers and informed and engaged community members. As Booker T. Washington stated, and this is one of my favorite prose, says success should be measured not so much by the situation of life as by the obstacles overcome while trying to succeed.

00;21;08;04 - 00;21;28;01

Unknown

is there anything in in your, your education pathway that has impacted how you can fight for greater access to your family visitation? Yes, it has educated me to, learn how to write an essay.

00;21;28;04 - 00;21;55;23

Unknown

Okay. Has taught me through that process and I and, you know, like, I didn't know how to write essays before, and now I just can't stop writing. Like, I can't stop talking kind of thing. So it's a great encouragement came on top of that and encouraged me to pursue the possibility it education. Certainly the possibility to, I guess,

00;21;55;25 - 00;22;40;14

Unknown

Possibility to create potential to transform lives for others. For the greater good. And by encouraging others and very positively positive thinking, compassion, strength, faith, confidence and and, bringing to bring healthy lives and happy communities while breaking the cycle of mass incarceration especially keeping others from going down this path, from going down the path. It's a crucial part of my life at this moment in time, in pushing for restorative justice one sentence at a time.

00;22;40;16 - 00;22;43;01

Unknown

That's what education stands for me. It's

00;22;43;15 - 00;22;52;10

Unknown

I know you've brought a group of of of women together, all of whom have life without parole.

00;22;52;13 - 00;23;13;00

Unknown

And you are? You're doing some pretty valuable work. What tools are you using that you actually learned, you know, through your education process, you know, in terms of bringing this group together and managing it and setting strategies? I mean, where did you learn how to do all that?

00;23;13;00 - 00;23;43;25

Unknown

it open my eye. But it's not about just, you know, sexuality or what I identify as or what I was born being female No, nothing like that. But it was the whole thing that the comparison to my identity and my role as an incarcerated individual and that little, I can actually, you know, let that stereotype and that one side of the story and be more than that.

00;23;43;27 - 00;23;59;05

Unknown

Well, it sounds like, you know, that was kind of a a driving force then, you know, in motivation, in terms of the work that you're doing with your group, isn't it called the Grace Coalition?

00;23;59;05 - 00;24;18;12

Unknown

Well, I learned that from being a student, I learned that from higher education from all the professors who taught me and other classes that have taught me all the time, I've taken so many classes.

00;24;18;15 - 00;24;26;17

Unknown

Math, science, humanities. Every single class I pulled some things out

00;24;26;22 - 00;24;34;27

Unknown

what is your major and what is the highest degree that you've received while you've been incarcerated?

00;24;34;29 - 00;24;48;20

Unknown

Let me see. I have an. I obtained my associates in arts and science degrees with honors on June 27, 2013

00;24;48;20 - 00;25;06;26

Unknown

partnering with the University of Puget Sound. And June 1 of last year, I obtained my Bachelor of Liberal Arts degree with cum laude, which is honor and the first life without the possibility of release or parole, incarcerated to accomplish this monument.

00;25;06;29 - 00;25;13;22

Unknown

This monument undertaken. I have to say this is a pivotal point on my life trajectory.

00;25;13;22 - 00;25;15;21

Unknown

Do you have any vocational degrees?

00;25;15;21 - 00;25;21;26

Unknown

I had my, I'm a transcriber for

00;25;23;01 - 00;26;04;11

Unknown

Arson research centers, accommodations in the braille department and, for the past five years now. So I had my vocational and a state with a very associates of music. I have obtained my four month, I have a ten month massage spine. Yes. Okay. So would you say that your vocational, certificates and use of your vocational skills.

00;26;04;11 - 00;26;32;25

Unknown

Because. Correct me if I'm wrong, do you still work in the Braille department? Yes, I am so within the department. And I'm actively, working out of part two of the music school. When you think for music is so big and 38 lessons and a test obtained my part one in associates in music, but part two and music full, and I'm going for my, unified, unified.

00;26;32;25 - 00;26;52;24

Unknown

english [unclear] then that was the whole entire country. Right now, I only have my State Department unified in that. And then I have to do literary proofreading I have nothing enough to do. You've obtained them all, you're a master.

00;26;52;24 - 00;27;02;01

Unknown

so, there's a lot of discussion in the greater world that, vocational courses.

00;27;02;01 - 00;27;45;18

Unknown

And, Bonnie, you earlier alluded to people taking more trades courses versus higher academic. So returning to that comment and, and, and your experience, Phiengchai, with both having vocational and academic skills and certificates and degrees under your belt, how do you feel? Having access to higher education has influenced your work in your vocational courses? Oh my gosh, it has absolutely just encouraged me to once again aspire to climb.

00;27;45;18 - 00;28;11;13

Unknown

That is, I can dream, right? Was that empowerment? And it was an encouragement for me to open up my self-esteem, to believe in myself, that I can actually ask for my application and through the application process, just, you know, like apply for Braille, because I felt like I can do this, I can do anything I set my heart and mind to.

00;28;11;15 - 00;28;41;17

Unknown

And because I felt so much is education, it was an it was like a an end to be like, I know I will excel in my vocational skills as well because that was just like, good to have. I don't know, maybe part of it was like, you know, like, I'm not like that stereotype, of what a prisoner is. And I just wanted to about those stereotypes, like, no, I'm not a stereotype.

00;28;41;20 - 00;29;17;10

Unknown

No, I'm not, I'm not what they say. I'm more than the worst things I've ever done. And I can excel that is so good in education. I mean, I'm going to do so good in Braille as well as, like, the bigger picture that I'm giving back to my community, especially the community for kids who are blind. There's this sense of fulfillment knowing that I'm freely giving and being a beacon in the dark then that I can hope and make.

00;29;17;12 - 00;29;18;21

Unknown

That makes sense.

00;29;18;21 - 00;29;29;24

Unknown

through education education pushed me to believe that like possibilities is endless. Futures endless

00;29;29;24 - 00;29;37;29

Unknown

Given, Phiengchai, that you're, you know getting close to it sounds like getting all the certifications you can in braille.

00;29;38;02 - 00;30;15;07

Unknown

And for my understanding there's no plan for a master's degree at the prison. So you've already gotten your BA and you're getting close to finishing up certifications in Braille. How do you feel about that? I mean, what are you going to do to pursue education if you know, if the, if it's not available? Well, I am currently I was asked about two months ago to be able to be a part of alumni leadership

00;30;15;09 - 00;30;46;22

Unknown

Alumni leadership is of course education, but it's all for the B.A. graduate to do like a program for the next cohort which is to be expected to start a follow up this year by the new BA director Regina [last name] and we were asked to be a part of it, a program, the content, the class and either add to class, TA the class,

00;30;46;22 - 00;30;54;23

Unknown

Or, since we are - we can't graduate, we can take one class, one free class a year.

00;30;54;23 - 00;31;19;24

Unknown

That's super exciting, because it's a way of me giving back to the program, to this program that I love so much, a program that believed in me. The program got me a way, at face value, in the classroom to get away from all the chaos, you know, prison, all the drama, the guys that, basically I felt stuck.

00;31;19;26 - 00;31;42;16

Unknown

Yeah, I just like walking out of my unit, I can shut all that. Walking past the department, I can shut all that. Shut all stuff off me. I can get away from all of it. Sometimes the politics of it all, Aunt Bonnie, and, like, in the unit and in the ground department It's just a lot.

00;31;42;18 - 00;32;09;13

Unknown

Heavyweight. A burden that you're carrying while you're working there? Yeah, I can be from project. It can be from, the project. Like from the deadline. It can be from people's attitude and personality. Everything has to be through people. Everything has to be so negative stuff. But you know what I have? All that I'm just sharing is just, like, sitting there in the classroom.

00;32;09;13 - 00;32;36;01

Unknown

I'm giving myself to the next cohort. And when somebody can ever feel like they can't do this, be like, you know what, sweetie? If I can do it, you can do that. You can. Anybody should do this. It depends, it's not about how smart you are. It's how bad you want it. Walk in there with that attitude - I'm in it to win it.

00;32;36;04 - 00;32;48;20

Unknown

so this is the, the, the last cohort of the bachelor's program from the, from the FEPS program, giving back to the next cohort.

00;32;48;20 - 00;32;54;24

Unknown

does the sense of community or the development of these cohorts giving back to the next cohort?

00;32;54;24 - 00;33;04;12

Unknown

Does that transcend the classroom or is it just confined to the classroom?

00;33;04;14 - 00;33;49;12

Unknown

I feel like it transcends the classroom in such a way. It's just like I was going to say is that it's that sense of belonging, right? Building that sense of belonging channel like amongst each other because at least to, give me, because it will lead all the, the expression from conversations about the opportunity to have other conversations such as like relatedness and willingness to provide hospitality and generosity not just towards ourselves but toward others as well. Like, the practice of it has that is together in a sense.

00;33;49;19 - 00;34;03;18

Unknown

In a sense, when things happen, we're not afraid to call things out. When, one of our cohort, at that time, has taken that work for class, that laptop out of the classroom.

00;34;03;18 - 00;34;17;07

Unknown

so, like, you guys hold each other accountable for to to protect your education, space and resources? Yeah, we. Yeah, we sure do that because, it's all about integrity.

00;34;17;07 - 00;34;27;15

Unknown

We have to protect the integrity of the program. We have to protect the integrity of each other, of professors, you know, the list goes on. It's bigger than what people see.

00;34;27;15 - 00;34;37;27

Unknown

Do you feel like education is under attack in some ways, and that you guys are stewards of this space? Yes, that's exactly how I feel like.

00;34;37;27 - 00;34;38;09

Unknown

Yes.

00;34;38;09 - 00;34;56;02

Unknown

How are you seen by others, other women in the prison that haven't, you know, haven't gone through the BA program and gotten a degree? Are they envious? Are they admiring or are they curious? And you know, how do you how do you handle handle that?

00;34;56;02 - 00;35;22;17

Unknown

I have seen as someone who basically has gotten, talked the talk and walked the walk and there's a lot of admiration in their eyes. And they have came up and told me they're like, oh my gosh, I just want you to know, P, I have watched you. I'm so excited. How can I be a part of what you're doing?

00;35;22;19 - 00;35;53;08

Unknown

So I was like, I was like - you can! You can absolutely like, that's, you know, like the thing. And I was just telling them about the personal statement that I wrote. How I got into you a get into education, that it merged together. So like creating me, creating all these wonderful things and so much they created the education for me and this is how it looks like.

00;35;53;08 - 00;36;18;19

Unknown

And this is what I envisioned it would be that went all up with them but were like, oh my gosh, all of the people who came up and talked to me. It was like I was promoting that, promoting the BA program, because they showed up for orientation and looked ready to apply for the FAFSA, and they wanted me to personally wanted me to help them, guide them to write their personal statement and who

00;36;18;21 - 00;36;30;27

Unknown

I think like they should reach out to for references. so I'm super excited, I feel like a shepherd guiding over a sheep.

00;36;30;27 - 00;36;45;03

Unknown

how many people are in the program and the FEPS program? In the cohort? Well, we don't know yet because it doesn't. It, Regina, the BA director,

00;36;45;05 - 00;37;11;10

Unknown

She's hoping for it to start the fall of this year. But I can tell you this much that there were about twenty to 25 people who showed up for the orientation and that other being alumni, excluding two, two people, for their personal reasons. Lisa and and Samantha that they show up for, you know, to do the Q&A.

00;37;11;10 - 00;37;18;13

Unknown

we have a whole bunch of people interested and there was more, but they had conflicts that couldn't show up. So

00;37;18;13 - 00;37;41;12

Unknown

you're expecting this next cohort to be larger than your group? Well, our group, we started with a total, to be exact, 19 people. And then, you know, like there was four that dropped out and there was two that was released and their parole, clemency, the list goes on.

00;37;41;14 - 00;38;10;11

Unknown

Wasn't it 10 that graduated in your cohort? Yes ma'am, there was ten that graduated. Yeah. So there was five that was released early. Excuse me. There was, yes, there was five that released early and four of them, dropped out. Okay. And I may have missed it, but how many did you say are going to be going into the new cohort or be part of it?

00;38;10;13 - 00;38;39;05

Unknown

Well, Regina is hoping for 20 but I think the space for the room. It's up to 25. But she want, she wants 20 originally, because she wants to make room for the alumni as well. Whoever wants to audit, who wants to TA, or a space of two for someone who wants to take class, because we, we're blessed with opportunities to take one free class a year, you know, because, we're UPS graduates .

00;38;39;07 - 00;38;48;14

Unknown

Is there, AA program as well, or just a BA program? That's the one I'm talking about right now is for the BA program,

00;38;48;14 - 00;39;00;20

Unknown

Bonnie, do you have any additional thoughts about anything we've talked about today or about education and identity from your personal experience or about your relationship with Phiengchai?

00;39;00;20 - 00;39;11;19

Unknown

I don't think I have anything more to add about my own personal identity and how it's been impacted by education. It's just education is a part of who I am.

00;39;11;20 - 00;39;23;16

Unknown

It's always been important. Given the opportunities that I had to, you know, to go to school and get an education and get a master's degree, and the doors that that opened for me. But I think

00;39;23;16 - 00;39;45;10

Unknown

what's more important is the education I've gained both from you and from Phiengchai, being able to go into the prison and become acquainted with a lifestyle and, you know, situations that I had no clue about and that it's called continuing education.

00;39;45;13 - 00;40;06;29

Unknown

And, the fact that, you know, that if I can bring a little bright spot to once a month, Phiengchai, that's really important to me. And, you know, we can share and talk about anything and everything and it's, it's okay. Yeah. You know, there's, there's nothing, you know, that I would tell you if I had an answer for.

00;40;06;29 - 00;40;17;23

Unknown

I'm sure you probably have more answers than I do for most things. So, yeah, it's just been a privilege. And as far as I'm concerned, this is part of my continuing education.

00;40;17;23 - 00;40;40;13

Unknown

it shouldn't be something to be afraid of. I, you know, I think there are people who hesitate. The idea of going to a prison to see someone. And in fact, I was in an operations meeting online with

folks, and I talked about going to you know, to visit, a woman at WCCW and I said, you know, jokingly, but it's true.

00;40;40;13 - 00;41;07;16

Unknown

If you can get beyond the barbed wire and the uniforms and being patted down, you know, is we have a good time. I mean, you know, you and I laugh a lot and we eat a lot and, you know, we share life experiences and get our pictures taken. You know, not mug shots, not mug shots. But, you know, I've got this whole stack of pictures from all of our visits, and my hair gets longer and my hair is shorter and and Phiengchai just keeps getting cuter.

00;41;07;18 - 00;41;26;22

Unknown

So, yeah, it's, you know, it's it's all, you know, being open to new experiences that might seem a bit, you know, nontraditional or out of place, but it's an opportunity to see someone else's world and, you know, and hopefully learn from it. Thank

00;41;26;22 - 00;41;59;28

Unknown

For education, I say go for it. The world is your oyster. Don't let anything or anyone. Stop you. It's an opportunity to educate yourself anywhere, to reach for the stars. Because isn't it right that thing, every single day we learn something new. So why not? Why not open your mind and your heart to listen to others?

00;42;00;03 - 00;42;31;15

Unknown

To be there in a classroom and be nonjudgmental and see things for what they see, people for what it is. Just be loving, kind, caring is opens that up. So once again go for it. As for Aunt Bonnie. Aunt Bonnie, I am so blessed to have you in my life. I enjoy every single visit, I really do.

00;42;31;17 - 00;42;55;22

Unknown

It gives me an opportunity to just, work on my [?], work on that little stuff because, while we know, of course, you know, like, Aunt Bonnie said, we take pictures. That was my track. And we just let you know that thing cause them to be chosen. That's what we do, you know? And I just want to make sure we have so many goofy ones, we have serious...

00;42;55;29 - 00;43;08;06

Unknown

We have a lot. We have serious ones, funny ones as well, and then we have - right? You know, where people just stand there and smile and all. So I enjoy, we have good food. We eat a lot.

00;43;08;06 - 00;43;13;20

Unknown

don't forget you finally let me beat you at Scrabble.

00;43;13;22 - 00;43;47;08

Unknown

[laughs] She says I always win, except yesterday she did beat me at Scrabble. It was like - how many points away? Less than ten points away. Well, just because you were adding them up, I. Yes, I was adding them up. I let her win. And that's what actually happened. Because Aunt Bonnie was whining so much about her losing this night, and I had to tap on my phone and call up so that I've been practicing for the past like three weeks, maybe haven't been practicing and maybe

00;43;47;08 - 00;44;00;03

Unknown

That's why she won, to be honest. You wait until next month, lady. I'm gonna win again. Undoubtedly. Like I claim, I'm claiming that championship back.