

## **Walter Fortson**

Walter Fortson is recent graduate of the University of Cambridge, where he received his Master of Philosophy in Criminology. Currently, Fortson works with the Petey Greene Program as the Program's Spokes Person and Manager of Special Projects. With its national headquarters in Princeton, the Petey Greene Program aims to be the largest volunteer program in the country offering high-quality tutoring and resources for all correctional students working toward their GED or high school diploma. Walter served as a counselor for, NJ-STEP, the first program of its kind, offering college-level credit-bearing courses toward a Liberal Arts degree that are transferable to a four-year college upon release.

Through the Mountainview Project (MVP) – a special program geared toward helping formerly incarcerated students go to college – Fortson was admitted to Rutgers University upon his release from prison in 2010. In June of 2013, he completed his Bachelor of Science in Exercise Physiology with minors in Biology and Psychology, graduating magna cum laude.

During his time at Rutgers, Fortson co-founded a student organization, in honor of the Mountainview Project, called The Rutgers University Mountainview Project Student Organization (RUMVP). Partnering with the Petey Greene Program, the student organization took undergraduates from Rutgers University into New Jersey prisons to serve as tutors. In addition, RUMVP served the Rutgers University and New Brunswick communities through various forms of service, and held events to raise awareness concerning the need to support, assist, and provide education as a means of self-empowerment for individuals who face systemic barriers to re-entry.

In 2012, Fortson was the recipient of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship, a national award that recognizes the country's student-leaders in public service. In 2013, he worked as a research associate with the Justice Policy Institute in Washington DC, evaluating alternatives to parole revocations in Maryland. Today, Fortson spends most of his time reading, writing, and working with organizations whose aim is to use education as a tool for liberation and self-actualization for individuals both currently and formerly incarcerated and other oppressed people.