

JASON LA MARD JONES

Community Development Advisor • Communication Specialist • U.S. Navy Veteran

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Currently based: Mindelo, Cabo Verde (U.S. citizen; permanent address in Texas) • Available for remote and international engagements

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Community development advisor and communication specialist with two decades of experience spanning U.S. military service, international broadcasting, veteran advocacy, cross-cultural education, and program design. Currently engaged in Mindelo, Cabo Verde, supporting the American Spaces program at the University of Cabo Verde, advising local nonprofits, and contributing to a community mapping and outreach initiative to better understand local services and needs. Graduate-trained in management and organizational leadership, with additional coursework in learning design and technology. Brings a disciplined, relationship-first approach to every engagement — building trust across cultural boundaries, designing locally relevant skills-based programming, and developing practical, sustainable community initiatives that connect people to opportunity.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Independent Community Volunteer & Program Advisor

2024 – Present

Mindelo, Cabo Verde (Independent)

- Facilitate English conversation sessions and professional development discussions for university students through the U.S. Embassy's American Spaces program, in coordination with the local program coordinator
- Contribute to early-stage programming concepts including skills-based workshops, career development sessions, and community knowledge-sharing events aligned with upcoming program initiatives
- Provide English language coaching and communication support to staff at Simabo, a local nonprofit organization
- Contribute to a community mapping and outreach effort (Cabo Verde Community Services & Collaboration Directory) to better understand local services and needs, connecting organizations, service providers, and community resources through bilingual outreach and needs assessment
- Arrived with a deliberate listening-first orientation, investing in relationship-building and community understanding before proposing any programs or frameworks

Remote Communication & Learning Consultant

Mar 2023 – Present

Independent / Freelance • Tomball, Texas (remote)

- Provide professional résumé optimization, content editing, and English communication coaching for U.S. and international clients
- Develop online learning resources and digital storytelling materials for individuals and small organizations
- Research and integrate AI-assisted tools to enhance writing, productivity, and online learning outcomes
- Advise international and remote teams on cross-cultural communication strategies and professional presentation

ESL Coach & Trainer

Feb 2017 – Mar 2023

Self-Employed (Freelance) • Minsk, Belarus / Kyiv, Ukraine / Remote

- Coached 150+ Belarusian and Ukrainian IT professionals in English fluency, business communication, and presentation skills through weekly one-on-one and group sessions
- Created and managed Americana Made Easy, a Telegram-based resource hub enabling self-paced English learning for Russian-speaking professionals seeking to work with American clients and colleagues

- Designed personalized lesson materials integrating American cultural context, confidence-building techniques, and practical workplace language usage

News Anchor & Editor

Nov 2019 – Jun 2020

UA|TV — Ukraine Public International Broadcasting • Kyiv, Ukraine

- Edited and presented live English-language news bulletins and pre-recorded interviews covering Ukraine and world affairs for international audiences in 30+ countries via satellite, cable, and online streaming
- Conducted Head to Head expert interviews across disciplines including politics, economics, military affairs, the IT sector, and arts and culture
- Adapted complex, fast-moving news content for international audiences, maintaining accuracy and clarity under live broadcast conditions

Native English Teacher

Sep 2019 – Dec 2019

American English Center (AEC) • Kyiv, Ukraine

- Taught Pre-intermediate to Advanced ESL classes of 4–12 students (ages 12–60), bridging curriculum content to real-life speaking situations
- Created a supplementary Telegram channel providing daily corrections, language insights, and encouragement between sessions
- Conducted midterm and end-of-term evaluations to assess student progress and determine advancement eligibility

Veteran Liaison Officer

Apr 2015 – Apr 2016

Veteran Evaluation Services (VES) • Houston, TX

- Scheduled 50+ veterans weekly for Compensation & Pension (C&P) exams with private practitioners and treatment facilities across 48 U.S. states and territories, consistently meeting VES's contractually required 21-day turnaround deadline
- Educated and advised 100+ veterans daily via phone and email on VA disability benefits, supportive services, and exam processing procedures
- De-escalated irate, threatening, or potentially suicidal veteran contacts transferred daily from the call center — providing calm, empathetic resolution while maintaining a safe environment for staff and clients
- Utilized the Operations Management System (OMS) to track and resolve 100+ daily veteran concerns, disputes, and scheduling requests across 48 states and 5 international sites
- Provided weekly coaching and essential training to 33+ call center representatives, improving their effectiveness in daily client interactions
- Collaborated across middle and upper management to resolve scheduling complications and ensure exam results were returned accurately and on time

VA Work-Study / Project Manager / Military & Veteran Liaison

Sep 2012 – Jan 2014

Office of Military & Veteran Resources (OMVR) — Azusa Pacific University • Azusa, CA

- Advised 200+ military and veteran students on transitional resources and VA benefits through peer counseling, mentoring, and structured outreach
- Spearheaded the creation of transitional programs and resources including workshops, information sessions, a community resource database, and a student resource packet for incoming and existing military and veteran students
- Conceived, coordinated with 50+ community partner agencies, and executed APU's first-ever Military and Veteran Resource Fair — providing employment, education, housing, counseling, disability claims assistance, and \$5,000 in clothing and food donations to the local veteran community
- Planned and executed APU's first-ever Veteran Awareness Week — a multi-day on-campus event featuring workshops and a mini-resource fair covering military-civilian career transition, veteran benefits, and personal finance education

Awards: *Certificate of Congressional Recognition (3) — Congresswoman Grace F. Napolitano (Apr 2013) • Congresswoman Linda T. Sánchez (Apr 2013 & Dec 2012)*

Ship's Serviceman Second Class Petty Officer (SH2/E-5, SW)

Jul 2004 – Jul 2009

United States Navy • San Diego, CA • Multiple International Deployments

- Supervised and maintained inventory control over \$200,000 in annual merchandise with 95% accuracy; managed shipboard service areas including the barbershop, vending, bulk storerooms, and ship's laundry
- Led a team of four in daily supply department operations, both stateside and across three deployments spanning 10 countries in the Asia-Pacific and Middle East
- Completed two combat deployments — Operation Iraqi Freedom (Iraq, 2006–2007) and Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan, 2009) — and one regional deployment, RIMPAC (Hawaii, 2008)
- Earned the Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist (ESWS) pin during the 2006 deployment — the highest professional qualification awarded to an enlisted sailor, requiring three months of rigorous training and examination
- Contributed to an extensive division-space renovation for the Navy's triennial INSURV inspection, helping the Supply Department achieve an above-average "Battle E" award
- Built and maintained collaborative relationships across Supply, Engineering, and Operations departments to support mission execution in high-pressure, multicultural environments

Awards: *Navy Achievement Medal (2)* • *Flag Letter of Commendation (1)*

VOLUNTEER & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Committee Member

Nov 2012 – Aug 2014

San Gabriel Valley Veterans Employment Committee (SGVVEC) • San Gabriel Valley, CA

- Organized monthly meetings and outreach events connecting veteran job seekers with employers, federal and state agencies, and social support providers
- Co-organized the 3rd Annual "Heroes in the Shadows" Homeless Veteran Stand Down, providing housing, medical, and employment assistance to 500+ disadvantaged veterans and their families
- Recruited local businesses and service organizations to donate time and resources toward veteran-focused community initiatives

Operations Director / Host (Volunteer)

Jun 2009 – Jul 2011

The Rock Church — "Revolver" Young Adult Outreach Ministry • San Diego, CA

- Oversaw a team of five in weekly operations for the Revolver Monday night outreach ministry, using art and music to build community among downtown San Diego young adults
- Managed weekly event setup and teardown; facilitated interactions between volunteers, regulars, and newcomers to cultivate an environment of belonging and connection

EDUCATION

Master of Arts — Management

2012 – 2014

Azusa Pacific University • Azusa, CA

Focus: leadership development, organizational communication, and team performance in diverse professional settings.

Bachelor of Science — Organizational Leadership

2010 – 2012

Azusa Pacific University • Azusa, CA

Emphasis on strategic management, ethics, human relations, and organizational change.

Graduate Coursework — Learning Design & Technology (non-degree)

2024

Purdue University

Instructional design models, adult learning theory, and educational technology integration.

Graduate Coursework — Theology & Theological Studies (non-degree)

2017 – 2019

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Advanced coursework in theology, ethics, and communication.

Russian Language Immersion Program (non-degree)

2016 – 2017

Minsk State Linguistic University • Minsk, Belarus

Full-time immersion in grammar, conversation, and cross-cultural communication.

CERTIFICATIONS & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM®) — Project Management Institute | CAPM# 3131889 | Previously certified: Aug 2021 – Aug 2024
- Certified ScrumMaster (CSM) — Scrum Alliance | Credential ID: 00140987 | Previously certified: Dec 2020 – Dec 2022
- Product Management Basics Certification — Pendo / Mind the Product
- Project Management Simplified — LinkedIn Learning

HONORS & RECOGNITION

- Certificate of Congressional Recognition — Congresswoman Grace F. Napolitano, 32nd District of California (April 2013)
- Certificate of Congressional Recognition — Congresswoman Linda T. Sánchez, 38th District of California (April 2013)
- Certificate of Congressional Recognition — Congresswoman Linda T. Sánchez, 38th District of California (December 2012)
- Navy Achievement Medal (2) • Flag Letter of Commendation (1) — United States Navy

CORE COMPETENCIES

Community Development & Program Design

Community needs assessment • Community mapping & stakeholder outreach • Program design & facilitation • Workshop development • Nonprofit collaboration • Event planning & execution • Volunteer coordination

Communication & Instruction

English coaching (ESL/EFL) • Cross-cultural communication • Curriculum & lesson design • Public speaking & presentation • Broadcast journalism & on-air delivery • Content writing & editing • Résumé & LinkedIn optimization

Project & Operations Management

Agile & Waterfall basics • Risk & quality management • Case management & coordination • Logistics & inventory management • Process improvement • Team training & staff development

Digital & AI Tools

AI-assisted writing & productivity tools • E-learning content development • Canva • Google Sites • Microsoft Office (Word, PowerPoint, Excel) • Prezi • Digital storytelling

Languages

English (native) • Russian (A2 — basic conversational)