



Founding Story

Project Avary was founded in 1999 by Danny Rifkin, co-manager of the Grateful Dead and Earl Smith, San Quentin Chaplain.

They initially met on a tour of the prison, but a conversation and longer-term collaboration developed when members of the Grateful Dead began regular visits to work with and record the San Quentin Choir.

In 1999 they envisioned, funded and bootstrapped with their friends and community, Project Avary Summer Camp to give children of incarcerated parents a carefree and immersive childhood experience.

Over the past 16 years Project Avary programs and offerings have evolved to meet the complex and unique needs of this community.