

HFP Dynamic Leadership!



Dan Rooks



Cindy Anderson



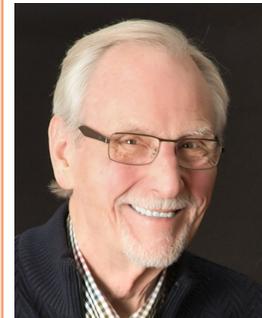
Russell Bloem

Russell Bloem has assumed chairmanship of the HFP Board of Directors. Bloem, of Grand Rapids, is the Vice President for Enrollment Management at Calvin College and directly oversees the offices of admissions, scholarships and financial aid, pre-college programs, and visits and hospitality. He has held that position since 2009, when he retired from the pharmaceutical industry. Russ was appointed to our board in 2016, succeeding Cindy Anderson of Grand Haven. Dr. Dan Rooks of Holland passed the baton to her in 2015, after serving 8 years as our chairman.

HFP pays tribute to these three individuals, who provided and continue to provide strong, dynamic leadership for this compassionate service offered to and provided for all inmates in the Michigan prison system.

From the desk of Doug: HFP: Here for the long run

Business as usual. Thank God!



The story began early on the morning of November 21, the day before Thanksgiving.

When pain in my arms and chest persisted, I was admitted at Mercy Hospital in Muskegon with an apparent heart attack. Subsequent tests not only confirmed that, but demanded open heart surgery for repair.

There are two positive aspects to this story.

The first is that the recovery so far, for this 82-year-old man, has been outstanding! Sincere thanks for all the kind expressions from so many friends.

But the second and very significant thing is that HFP operations continued without a hitch.

Our front page story today discusses board leadership, but I'd like to focus for a moment on our outgoing board chair, Cindy Anderson. One of her primary goals was succession planning. Cindy was determined to make sure that, if something ever happened to Doug, our work would go on. Thanks to her leadership, we had a team in place when my heart problems rose to the surface.

Murphy's Law saw to it that this just happened to be one of our busiest weeks in history. Matt and Susie were handling something like 35 contacts per day from prisoners or their loved ones. But, thanks to advance planning, they were ready and equipped to handle the flow, and we never missed a beat!

So, a tribute today to Cindy, to our team, and to the Great Physician.

Doug's New Book!



Humanity for Prisoners? Now available online at Humanityforprisoners.org
\$14.95 paperback, \$9.95 ebook

HFP client sees answers

HFP client Mr. W has been struggling with eye issue for years, and had a very specific question about a procedure he underwent. HFP turned to our friend Dr. Tom, an ophthalmologist, who provided an in-depth answer with a photo diagram as well. Once we sent that to Mr. W, this was his reply:

"I RECD YOUR AWESOME ANSWER TO MY REQUEST. IN THE PAST 10 YRS I HAVE NEVER BEEN MADE PRIVY TO THE INFO THAT DR TOM RELAYED TO ME VIA YOU GUYS. NOW I UNDERSTAND! AS ALWAYS, DR TOM'S DIAGNOSIS WAS RIGHT ON!! THANKS VERY MUCH TO ALL."

**Donate to HFP online:
Humanityforprisoners.org**

Prisoners Helping Prisoners

Inmate Ricardo Ferrell, one of HFP’s writers behind bars, gives us an update on the Youth Deterrent Program:

A dream child of Inmate Darryl Woods, Sr., the program was approved by Governor Granholm and the MDOC in 2008. Given the green light to move forward with their initiative to deter at-risk youth from going down the path of destruction, death or prison, participating inmates received specialized training in effective communication and active listening skills. “The excitement and enthusiasm was evident by how hard we all continued working to see the program become a success. The first group consisted of teens ages 14-18 from Detroit, Saginaw and Port Huron. Most, if not all, already had experienced brushes with the juvenile justice system, in that, they were either facing charges ranging from theft, selling drugs, carrying guns, or attempted murder. Some were on probation. “Over the past ten years the Youth Deterrent Program has helped hundreds, if not well over a thousand troubled at-risk teens avoid the pitfalls associated with indulging in criminal thinking and/or activities. We took on the motto of No Youth Left Behind and vigorously worked in saving the lives of so-called at-risk youth by providing them with viable alternatives rather than the indulgence in criminality. “The men who have participated over the last decade in this remarkable life-changing program need to continuously be recognized and commended for their efforts in making a difference in the lives of our kids. The Youth Deterrent Committee vows to keep being their brothers’ keeper by deterring teens from destructive paths and lifestyles.”

Academia helping prisoners

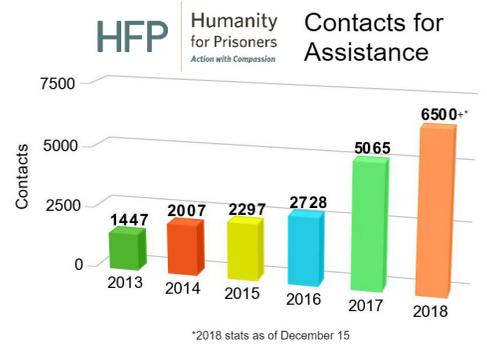
December 4 was a big day at the Michigan Reformatory in Ionia. That was graduation day for students of the Inside Out Prison Exchange Program sponsored by Grand Valley State University. The program has been in existence for 9 years. It began at Temple University in 1991, and has since expanded to a number of states. Here in Michigan, the IO program began nearly 12 years ago at the Ryan Correctional Facility in Detroit, with the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Currently the program is in 9 MDOC facilities.

HFP helping prisoners

Friends and family members are encouraged to write a letter of support to the Michigan Parole Board when a state inmate is considered for possible release. But what to say, and how to say it? Some agencies have prepared suggested sample letters, but that didn’t seem sufficient for HFP. So, our Vice President Holly Honig-Josephson started from scratch. We now have a template that should be helpful to anyone hoping to write a letter of support to the Parole Board. Anyone wishing a copy should contact our office.

Michigan legislators helping no one

While the lame-duck Michigan legislature raced to restrict the powers of three newly elected top state officials, it failed to take any action on important raise-the-age legislation. The Raise the Age (RTA) coalition vowed to continue its fight next year, after learning that the Michigan Legislature would adjourn the 2017-18 session without acting on the bipartisan package to ‘raise the age’ and allow 17-year-olds to access and receive services in the juvenile justice system. HFP supports this effort. Michigan is one of a few states still treating these teens as adults.



HFP: Breaking Records Daily!

“The goal in life is not surpass the competition, but to surpass the expectations we set for ourselves. Success is sweetest when we break our own record then wake up the next day ready to do it all over again.”
- Lethia Owens

HFP founder/president Doug Tjapkes reported to our Board of Directors at the end of 2014 that our office would have responded to more than 2,000 contacts that year. A new record!

Fast forward to 2017, and for the first time in history we responded to 5,000+ contacts.

Then came 2018, when, for the first time, a monthly total exceeded 600! That happened in 6 of the 12 months this year. The final number for the year will top 6,500, and our staff is currently working with well over 2,000 Michigan inmates.

Lives are being touched, and we’re poised and ready to do even better in 2019.

HFP Wish List

Office Accessories!

From time to time, we put out a wish list of items we need at the HFP office. Our Client Services Specialist, Susie, deals with back issues that make it hard to work sitting down sometimes. With that in mind, we’d like to get Susie an **Adjustable Standing Desk** and **Anti-Fatigue Standing Floor Mat** to help her work more comfortably. If you’d like to help, please contact our office at 616.935.0075 or email Matt at matt@humanityforprisoners.org.