

HFP COMMUNICATOR

News from Humanity for Prisoners

Humanityforprisoners.org

616.935.0075

December 2017

Merry Christmas December Donations Doubled

Thanks to generous donors, all contributions up to a total of \$25,000 will be matched this month!

With your generous response, 2018 will get off to a great start!

HFP Christmas Cards Now Available



Just in time for the holidays, Humanity for Prisoners introduces a selection of four Christmas cards, two of which have specific themes in Grand Haven. Prison Artist Duane Montney, better known as “DJ,” offered to use his gifts to help HFP raise urgently needed year-end funds. There’s a generic theme for two of the covers, but the others feature these Grand Haven icons - the Pere Marquette caboose at Chinook Pier and St. John’s Episcopal Church!

The cards are selling for \$30 for a pack of 10, and can be ordered on HFP’s website, humanityforprisoners.org.



Montney, 43, resides in the Ionia Correctional Facility, serving a sentence of 50-75 years, handed down when he was a juvenile. He says art teaches him discipline and helps him achieve goals, and expressed the hope that his work would bring joy to others.



Text for the cards was written by the Rev. Dr. Jared Cramer, rector of St. John’s Episcopal Church and member of the HFP Board of Directors.

GR Choir of Men and Boys in Grand Haven

St. John’s Episcopal Church, Friday, Dec 8, 7:30 PM



The perfect way to begin this season: an Advent Service of Lessons & Carols. Free -will offering for Humanity for Prisoners. Everyone invited. Reception to follow.

From the desk of Doug: The Christmas gift that counts: Love

What can I (we) give prisoners? At Christmas-time, I struggle with that question every year!

How I wish we had an unlimited budget so that, at the very least, we could send a simple, meaningful card to the nearly 2,000 inmates in our files.

Not only would it be far too expensive for our meager budget, it

would be an impossible task. We don’t have the manpower or the time for such a project, either.

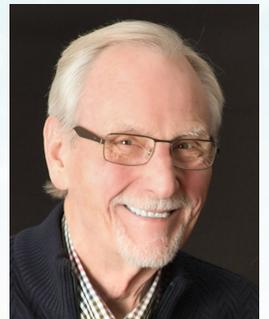
I once lamented to a prisoner about how poorly I answered questions at a workshop, and he immediately chided me: **First, never, ever think you are not having an impact during your visits. If you measure your success/failure based on the quality of the questions, you will never get a true measure of how much we appreciate you!**

That’s the message to all of us in the Christmas season. Cards and presents aren’t necessary for inmates. Love is. Through your dollars and your prayers, we’re able to convey love in a very tangible way.

Says Mother Teresa:

Love is a one-way street. It always moves away from self in the direction of the other. Love is the ultimate gift of our selves to others. When we stop giving we stop loving, when we stop loving we stop growing, and unless we grow we will never attain personal fulfillment; we will never open out to receive the life of God. It is through love we encounter God.”

That’s the way prisoners will encounter God, as well.



HUMANITY FOR PRISONERS IS NOT A CLICHE

by Randal LeFevre, #289197

My father died last July, and the prison violated policy by refusing to grant me a special visit with my sister who flew here from North Carolina to inform me. My pain was magnified dramatically because I'd been in prison since 1999, without a visit from anyone.

On August 27, 2017, I e-mailed Humanity for Prisoners and told them my story. On August 28, 2017, Dr. Bob, a semi-retired medical doctor/current

HFP Medical Consultant, e-mailed me back. He said he was devastated to hear my story, and said he'd be to visit me in Oct/Nov. He also started emailing me a daily spiritual devotional.

On November 4, 2017, 1 day after my 46th birthday, Dr. Bob came to see me, and I experienced my very first prison visit in 18 years! We began and ended our visit with prayer. Conversation flowed freely, and he insisted on feeding me...acts of com-

passion and love.

I am so thankful to Dr. Bob and HFP. *I was hungry, and they fed me. I was thirsty, and they gave me drink. I was a stranger, and they took me in. I was naked, and they clothed me. I was sick, and they visited me. I was in prison, and they came unto me.* All praise be to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Ann Arbor concert raises \$4,000 for HFP



Baritone Jean Bernard Cerin & pianist Veena Kulkarni-Rankin celebrated the amazing compassion, action & advocacy of Humanity for Prisoners with a benefit concert at the Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church on October 22. Ex-offender Joe Evans (pictured above with Veena Kulkarni-Rankin), who served nearly 40 years in prison, told of HFP's assistance and encouragement bringing about his eventual release.



Fr. Greg Boyle's speech on Youtube

Author of TATTOOS ON THE HEART and founder of Homeboy Industries, Fr. Boyle delighted a crowd of 400 in Grand Haven on October 23. His entire address can now be seen at <https://youtu.be/uC6UBJFaBIY>

Attention Michigan taxpayers

Michigan is among the highest spenders on inmate health care in the country, spending \$8,287 per inmate. Michigan's spending is significantly higher than all of its neighboring states.

And

Michigan has the highest percentage of inmates who are 55 or older in the country, at 14.6% of the inmate population.



Watchdog.org

Yarn program allows inmates to give back

HFP continues to donate yarn to various Michigan prisoners for their hobby-craft programs. The guys who crochet at Parnall Correctional Facility in Jackson recently sent us this report:

“Our next shipment is going to Homeless Veterans in the area. Thanks for all you have done for this program. To date, we have donated approximately 400 lap blankets and full size Afghans. This is all due to the generosity of organizations like yourselves that care enough to do things like this.”

What they're saying

Prisoners like it when HFP comes to present a program: *Your reputation precedes you.....That's why the crowds are so large. You beat out TV.....Sports....Yard.....Weight Pit and Phone Calls to family and friends!*

Happy New Year from all of us at HFP!