

EXCITEMENT! HFP team touching lives!

**HFP staff testifies at Public Hearings,
conducted by the Michigan Parole Board**

- Eddie receives a parole after serving 45 years!
- Tony is granted a parole after serving 40 years!
- Two terminally ill inmates receive medical paroles!

**HFP team conducts in-prison
workshops for inmates**

**We interact with Michigan prisoners on topics of commutation applications
and Parole Board Public Hearings!**

**HFP Professional Advisory
Team “goes to bat”**

-Andy gets reading glasses after waiting nearly a year!

**HFP brings the Power of Peace
into a local high school**



Internationally renowned author, teacher, coach and prison lecturer Kit Cummins urges more than 300 teenagers to dream and to care about others. Thanks to HFP director Mary Berghuis, Kit brought his *Power of Peace* message to Western Michigan Christian High School in Muskegon on February 12.



HFP makes a prison visit possible!

Betty lives in Europe, and has been attempting to get her name on a friend's visitor list for more than six months. HFP worked with MDOC personnel. She'll finally get to visit her friend this summer!

Mike's mom gets meals!

A prisoner shared the heart-breaking story of his elderly mother suffering burns in her kitchen, because she is no longer able to cook with her stove. Our team contacted Meals on Wheels in her city, and she's now receiving food daily. Action with compassion!

Kind words about HFP from a Michigan prisoner

In our world of loneliness and despair, there is an enormous need for men and women who know the heart of God, a heart that forgives, cares, reaches out and wants to heal. In that heart there is no suspicion, no vindictiveness, no resentment, and not a tinge of hatred. It is a heart that wants only to give love and receive love in response. It is a heart that suffers immensely because it sees the magnitude of human pain and the great resistance to trusting the heart of God who wants to offer consolation and hope.

From the desk of Doug: Lent: A time to give up? Or give!

As I'm writing this column I have just opened envelopes containing two greeting cards.

The first was artistically and meticulously created...it must have taken hours! A **prisoner** took this extra step to thank us for helping with a commutation application.

But it was much more than that. He thanked me for being a friend.

The second came with this note: *I have*

decided to offer appreciation during Lent instead of forgoing sweets or Diet Coke. I have decided to make a list of the people who have made my life better, and thank each one of you. You came to mind. I wanted to tell you how much I appreciate you...you bless my life! It came from a former prisoner.

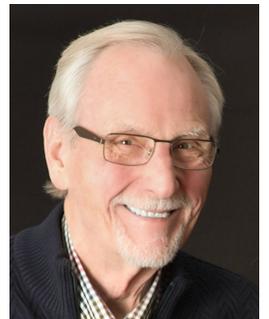
Both seemed so appropriate in this contemplative 40-day period, and lead me to these thoughts.

For Lent, I like the idea of *doing* something, and recommend a focus on prisoners. If you want to stretch yourself, you can arrange an in-prison visit or experience. Or, perhaps you'd like to get permanently involved in an interactive prison ministry.

At the very least, though, please consider the *plight* of prisoners. Pray for them and their situation, for better food, better medical care, safer conditions, justice. Also, remember the ministries who serve inmates. A huge challenge is funding, because the cause is so unpopular. Prayers and dollars make a great combination!

Yes, doing and giving feel right, as we remember His gift.

We'll celebrate that on Easter Morning: HE IS RISEN!



Join a club

Thinking about making a monthly pledge to HFP? Join a club! HFP has been working to build our monthly donor base with regularly scheduled donations. Here are some options:

The Mocha Club (\$5 a week): Your favorite latte or mocha will cost about \$5. We're asking your pledge for the price of one per week. If everyone on HFP's mailing list committed to this, we would cover our budget for the year!

The 100 Club (\$100 a month): Founded in hopes of getting 100 members at \$100 each

The Compassion Club (\$500 a month): An exclusive club for major donors

If none of these fit with what you feel called to donate, we'll accept your monthly pledge in any amount. Email HFP Executive Director Matt Tjapkes matt@humanityforprisoners.org to learn more about monthly giving, including how HFP can set up your monthly payment from a bank account so you never have to remember it again!

PRISONERS SPEAK OUT

The following editorial comments have been written by Michigan prisoners on topics they feel deserve your attention. So do we!

On caring for the mentally ill in prison:

The idea of carefully selecting and training a specific group of prisoners (similar to POA training) in order to house them alongside fellow prisoners, who have demonstrated coping difficulties, may very well prove to be beneficial to both the department and each group of prisoners. This training and practice would provide a round the clock observation of those in the mental health unit and high risk housing units...

On releasing the elderly:

Elderly prisoners in particular who have served many decades behind bars and are too frail to walk on their own, continues to be a financial nightmare due to the enormous cost of their health coverage. What penological sense does it make to hold onto geriatric prisoners who don't have the capacity to bring harm to anyone, not even themselves?

On parolable lifers:

They are, too often, denied reentry into society by the Parole Board in many instances primarily based on the nature and seriousness of their offense despite the fact they've already been convicted and sentenced for that very crime. Why continue to cause a burden on the state's budget when it's a proven fact these groups pose the lowest risk when it comes to reoffending - where less than 2% actually recidivate?

On behavior by the COs:

According to the MDOC employee handbook guards are supposed to set themselves out as examples for offenders. But the examples set by most guards are appalling. Prison policy and procedures exist in name only as the guards routinely flout them and hold themselves out as the final authority. Supervisory staff, as a matter of course, turn a blind eye if not actually acquiescing.

On the new mail policy:

The Parole Board emphasizes the importance of maintaining a strong network of support with family, friends and the community as an integral component in the rehabilitative process, but then MDOC imposes mail restrictions which impede a prisoner's ability to establish and maintain those relationships.

A parent weighs in

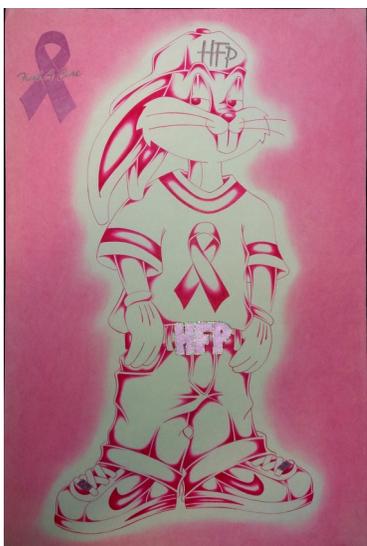
Do you realize that our phone calls are \$3.00 for 15 minutes from the Michigan State prisons? Not terrible until I found out that in Ohio the same company now charges 80 cents for 15 minutes. This is another unbelievable situation. We spend nearly a hundred dollars a month! Eighty cents a call would be a huge savings.

HFP Wish List

On occasion, Humanity for Prisoners has needs arise that people may wish to contribute instead of monetary donations. This month, HFP is in need of a new desktop printer for Doug. One of the realities with the massive increase in requests for help is that we are sending out 10-15 letters a day.

With that in mind, we have selected a Canon PIXMA IP110 9596B002 Color Inkjet Wireless Mobile Printer. The total cost on this printer is \$180.

If you'd like to contribute to the purchase of this printer, please contact our office at 616.935.0075 or info@humanityforprisoners.org.



A custom HFP Breast Cancer Awareness drawing done by HFP client Roberto Barerra