

Pandemic Pandemonium

Michigan tops nation in prisoner deaths Over 50 prisoner deaths and at least 2 staff 2,000+ test positive

Notes from the Michigan Department of Corrections

- Michigan State Industries has produced masks for all prisoners and CF staff
- Facilities have enhanced cleaning efforts and cleaning products are available
- Movements have been modified to help facilitate social distancing
- Number of prisoners attending classes and meals has been reduced so prisoners can be seated farther apart
- Prisoners who test positive for the virus are isolated from the general population and any quarantine.
- A unit has also been established at Central Michigan Correctional Facility for recovered prisoners who previously tested positive for the virus.
- The MDOC has partnered with the Michigan National Guard to begin facility-wide testing

Notes from the Legislative Corrections Ombudsman

Fewer Free Phone Calls

The MDOC telephone vendor, GTL, has dropped its free service for free prisoner phone calls during the pandemic from two to one call per week. MDOC said they didn't agree with the decision, but have no way of dictating how many free calls GTL provides because of contractual obligations. GTL had offered the free phone calls after MDOC contacted them to see if the company could assist it with maintaining family contact since in-person visits have been suspended during the pandemic. GTL justified reducing the free phone calls to one stating that the two free calls was no longer a sustainable model for them.

Transfers from county jails resume

The Governor's Executive Order preventing county jails from transferring prisoners to the state prison system has ended and county jail inmates will start to be transferred to the Egeler Reception and Guidance Center as they were before the pandemic beginning this month. There has been a decline in the prison population during the pandemic because county jail inmates have not been sent to the state and due to the increase in paroles. The population is now just less than 37,000 prisoners and small increases to the state prisoner population will likely be seen as this process reengages. All newly transferred county jail inmates will be given the PCR/Swab test and those refusing will be quarantined.

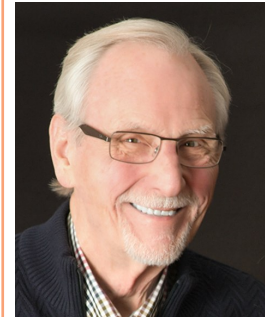
Restitution fees still being taken during pandemic

I have had a lot of questions asking if the MDOC can/will stop taking funds when loved ones send money to their incarcerated loved ones so they can use that to purchase more things from the store since the monthly amount prisoners can spend has been increased. MDOC doesn't have any choice with the restitution dollars, it's required by law. MDOC policy simply reflects the law in regard to restitution collection and sends the money to the court for distribution to crime victims. It would require legislative action to change the law for this to stop which I don't expect at this time, at least not in the short term.

From the desk of Doug:

HFP Angels We've got 'em!

You'd think I would know better by now. In the past 20 years, whenever a financial



crisis seemed imminent, support always arrived! I think of this line in an old hymn: **Be not**

**dismayed whate'er betide,
God will take care of you.**

But, we've never had a pandemic before. When people lose their jobs, when families are hungry, when push comes to shove, charitable organizations are not going to be number one on a priority list. Once again, no worry!

The neat thing is, we didn't even have to hold out our hand. When the crisis came, that's when the angels arrived, large and small, wanting no recognition, just wanting to make a difference! Major donors upped their numbers, others stepped in to help with office supplies, prisoners made donations in record numbers! On and on.

Said David and Carol Myers, of Holland: **"We support Humanity for Prisoners because there are so many unmet needs in our prison populations. However, the need is especially great now with the coronavirus increasing fear and anxiety inside prisons. HfP responds with caring and necessary services. Supporting HfP is one way of living into Matthew 25's mandate to visit those who are in prison."**

We are so thankful!

Prisoners are so grateful!

"I believe friends are quiet angels who lift us to our feet when our wings have trouble remembering how to fly."

~ Lorraine K. Mitchell

HFP staffers respond to hundreds of messages!

Matt, tell your father and staff I said thanks for helping us in the regular times of madness, and in this pandemic. When many of us can't find the answers in hope or in prayers, we find inspiration in you and your staff!

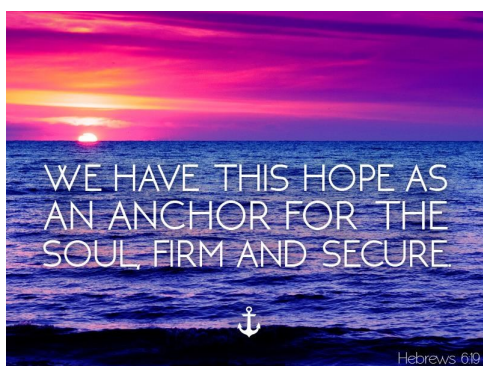
Matt, I wanted you to know that I'm doing okay, in fact we've not had any outbreaks thus far at this facility. Plus, it is important to me that you know that as a person of deep abiding faith that I give special attention and prayer towards keeping you and yours uplifted in faith during these difficult times. Tell my Brother Doug to stay strong, to be encouraged, and to remain confident that God is in control.

Susie, I'm always here for you if you need to talk, because our world is going through hard trying times. We all need to talk to someone to help us get through hard trying times. You guys are suffering too. You stand up for so many people and you try to help so many people. I appreciate you and please keep up the good work. I'll always support you because you are doing the work of God.

Susie, everyone is thanking first responders right now, but everything you have done over the months has been mine and other's first responders well before the virus crisis, so I want to say Thank You! I wish all of you at Humanity For Prisoners the best, you are in my prayers and thoughts. Again, thank you.

I just wanted to let you know that we are praying for you and yours and all Humanity personnel. I am very thankful for all that you do for us and do pray that you are well and blessed. Take care and know this pandemic will soon pass and the world will be free to live free, again. Thanks for all that you've done over the years! You are certainly appreciated, even where a lot of prisoners don't express so.

Some prisoner cards sent to us:



Welcome new treasurer

David Bardolph of Grand Rapids has been appointed to the Board of Directors as a new board member and treasurer of Humanity for Prisoners.

Dave served the Grand Rapids Public School system for 31 years, retiring in 2011 from his position as Director of Budget and Accounting.

In 2013, he became Controller at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, a position he held until 2019. He has a business degree from Calvin University, and an MBA from Western Michigan University.



Which crime is worse?

The fact that we keep housing sick prisoners who are not a danger to themselves and others, the fact that they have competent family members who are willing to take care of them...to keep them in prison becomes more evil and inhumane than the crime they committed. I believe, we the system become criminals of overextended justice. Then our overextended justice becomes criminal.

Rev. Rodney Gulley, New Covenant Community Baptist Church, Benton Harbor and Member, Board of Directors, Humanity for Prisoners

Unball raises over 10K!

Our thanks to all who chose not to attend our un-event this year! A typical response from one of our friends:

To Matt and Doug: Yesterday I got my tickets to the Unball. As usual, James and I are thrilled to not attend this event together and we both look forward to not seeing either of you there. 🍷❤️