

## Fr. Boyle Speaks to a crowd of 400!

Father Greg Boyle, founder of Homeboy Industries and author of "Tattoos on the Heart" challenged a crowd of nearly 400 at HFP's fundraising event October 12, at Grand Haven's Lakeshore Middle School



HFP Founder Doug Tjapkes presents a prayer shawl to Fr. Boyle. The shawl had been created by inmates at Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility. Nearly 400 people turned out to hear this dynamic speaker. Said HFP Executive Director Matt Tjapkes, he delivered *a powerful message about the community of kinship, and going out to the margins to stand with those whose burdens they cannot bear. The audience laughed, cried, and came away moved by this powerful message.*



*You stand with the least likely to succeed until success is succeeded by something more valuable: kinship. You stand with the belligerent, the surly and the badly behaved until bad behavior is recognized for the language it is: the vocabulary of the deeply wounded and of those whose burdens are more than they can bear.*

## Dan & Doug speak to crowd of 200!

HFP President Doug Tjapkes and former HFP Board Chairman Dan Rooks were welcomed by a crowd of nearly 200 inmates at the Thumb Correctional Facility in Lapeer on Saturday, October 14. Tjapkes and Rooks periodically take their show on the road to prison facilities throughout the State of Michigan. Doug talks about the various services that HFP offers, and Dan, a clinical psychologist, provides a meaningful lecture on non-violent communication. In challenging his many friends behind bars, Doug said *You can't do anything about where you live, but you can do something about how you live. You can make a difference. You must make a difference. You WILL make a difference!*

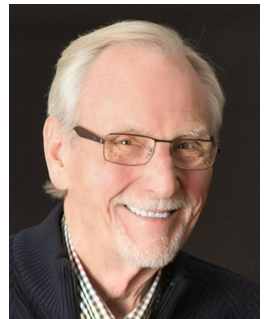
## From the desk of Doug: Lots of compassion; Not many answers

It's no wonder some of you get frustrated with us.

We understand that, if you're going to donate money and invest in HFP, you want to see results. You want specifics. Yet, that information can be elusive.

A few weeks ago Dr. Dan Rooks and I

presented another of our programs to Michigan prisoners. Speaking with nearly 200 guys at the Thumb



Correctional Facility in Lapeer, I was able to explain the many services that HFP offers, the many ways that we try to help.

But then came the Q & A session...perhaps the most popular part of these get-togethers. It's probably a good thing you weren't there, because I couldn't and didn't give good answers. Where to go with a wrongful conviction when an Innocence project turns you down? What specifically does the Parole Board want to see in a commutations application? What to do about erroneous information in official documents that keep prompting the Parole Board to make negative decisions? What to do about unfair sentencing?

I don't have answers. In some cases we can make referrals. In some cases we can do some checking and asking. But, often, there are no answers.

Yet, they stand in line to shake our hands and to thank us.

*Helping is good, I am learning, but caring is essential!*

A young man with a glow in his face said, "I'm a believer, and I recognize when someone is obeying scripture and 'speaking up for those who cannot speak for themselves.'" I needed that.

## THE BLESSING OF RESPONSE!

### Multiple respondents when a problem is exposed

**Joyce Davis**, of Detroit, reports that she is banned from visiting her two sons in prison due to unpaid traffic tickets.

**HUMANITY FOR PRISONERS** responds, confirming the situation with the MDOC, and then reaching out for assistance.

**EQUAL JUSTICE UNDER LAW** responds, first by contacting the Department of Corrections, then by seeking publicity.

**THE MARSHALL PROJECT** responds, coaching Mrs. Davis on how to write a story, then publishing her plight on the internet.

**GENEROUS PEOPLE** respond all over the country, and thanks to their donations to a GoFundMe Account, *the money is raised to pay off the tickets in 5 hours!*

Joyce Davis: *This is a blessing from God!*

### Calvin student wins national award

Eric Boldiszar, resident of the R.A. Handlon Correctional Facility in Ionia, has received the **2107 Bert Thompson Award for Faith-Based Programs** from the National Association of Community and Restorative Justice. Boldiszar, a sophomore in the Calvin Prison Initiative project, was recognized for his efforts in organizing a conference held on the campus of Hope College last March, called *St. Benedict Institute's Hope for Restoration: Radical Hospitality and Prison Reform Conference*. CPI program assistant and coordinator Julie Bylsma accepted the award on Boldiszar's behalf at the NACRJ conference in California. Congrats to Eric from the entire HFP gang!



### Kind sentiments from behind bars

"Thank you again for your ongoing support of all of us in state's custody. I cannot tell you how reassuring it is to have advocates on the outside. Although we are paying our debt to society for whatever wrongs we have done, many of us pay in ways neither appropriate nor lawful to the crime we committed, or to the sentence we were given. In all the ways your ministry is assisting those in prison I thank you and pray for your continued success and blessings."

"I just wanted to say that I appreciated you sending someone to support me at my Public Hearing. I was so blessed that day that I wanted to cry."

"I want to inform you that I received my glasses from Zenni Optical on 10/04/17, I also want to thank you ever so much for your help...I can see and read a whole lot better now."

"I'd like to thank you all. There was a guy that I thought was my dad, and you guys got me his address. I wrote him and once I got in contact with him we did a DNA test, and I found he was in fact my dad! Thank you!"

### Thoughts about food

From an inmate at Lakeland CF, Coldwater:  
*We as representatives have spoken to the warden a few times about the chow hall not being sanitary. Two months in a row we brought this up and, well, the other day even after the complaints there were maggots found on the serving line in the cart that holds our breads, spoons and fruits. They had to take the cart out and off the compound, and replaced it a day later. But all in all, why were these things there on the line we are served food from after so many complaints? It's sad. I would hope that one day this changes.*

### Thoughts about new MDOC mail policy

*Now we have to put first and last names on envelopes and on the letters themselves. I write to lots of inmates as my "ministry" to bring a little bit of joy to their lives, if only to say "you are not forgotten." However, most of them do not know my real name - it is a security issue. As one of my young pen pals said, 'If someone got mad at me and got into my stuff they would get your name and address.' I simply address and sign my letters as "Ladyhawk." So now the system is going to require my full name on everything? What is wrong with having a pen name?*

### Food for thought

The late Nelson Mandela discusses prison food:  
*The authorities liked to say that we received a balanced diet; it was indeed balanced – between the unpalatable and the inedible.*

**"There is no 'them' and 'us.'  
There is only us."**

**Fr. Greg Boyle**

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