

Macomb Mayhem!



108 men, wrong place, wrong time!

An HFP client's account from Macomb CF:

"On March 20th all prisoners were given swab tests. On March 27th and 28th approximately 80-90 prisoners were moved to 5-unit for testing positive. On June 2nd at approximately 6:30 p.m. the facility was placed on lockdown and the block (prisoner) representatives were called to the control center to meet with administration. The block representatives were told that a mistake had occurred and 54 prisoners who had tested negative on the swab test were accidentally moved to 5-unit on the 27th and 28th. Administration went on to say, the 54 prisoners who were actually positive remain in the population and will be getting moved to 5-unit and the 54 prisoners accidentally placed in 5-unit will be placed in quarantine for 14 days. All of these moves took place late June 2nd. While the positive prisoners were removed from population--eventually--their bunkies remained in population. And in many cases administration moved another prisoner into the infected prisoner's cell within 45 minutes without sanitizing the cell. Yes, it took 8-9 days for administration to remove the prisoners from population who they thought tested positive. It took 13 days to move all of the prisoners who actually tested positive. One must ask how many new prisoners got infected with COVID-19 over the 13 days it took to move all of the infected prisoners. And how many new prisoners were infected through such an inept process?"

George couldn't breathe

Another HFP client's account from Macomb CF:

On Friday, June 5, 2020, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer marched with protestors over social injustice issues stemming from police brutality of African-Americans and the recent death of George Floyd at the "knee" of a white police officer in Minnesota as 3 other officers stood by and watched. Floyd's last words "I can't breathe" have been heard around the globe sparking these protests in hopes to change the systemic racism within policing around the country. I wanted to start this post off with the above paragraph because I want you, the reader, to come to your own conclusion as you read on.



As I sit in my cell at the Macomb Correctional Facility (MRF) writing this, watching the protests on my TV, visualizing Governor Whitmer marching for social justice, I could not stop thinking about William Garrison dying on April 13, 2020, in Housing Unit 1 at MRF. Prior to his passing, William's cellmate reported to 3 prison staff members that William was sick and could not "breathe." William contracted

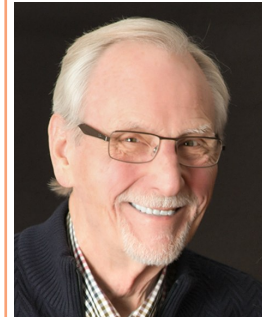
COVID-19 and died 1 month prior to his release. William had entered prison as a teenager and had served 44 years of a life without parole sentence before being resentenced under the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling that juvenile offenders could not automatically be given life without parole sentences. William Garrison was an African-American man.

William could not "breathe" because he contracted COVID-19 while in prison. 3 prison staff stood by failing to help him. The Michigan Department of Corrections is under the "Executive Branch" of the government. Isn't William Garrison's death a social injustice?

From the desk of Doug:

Prison Population Reduced What didn't happen...

Weeks ago, when covering a fatal state prison incident, ABC news said: "When the first presumptive cases of COVID-19 were



announced in Michigan in early March, corrections officials began scrambling to reduce the state prison population, anticipating that social distancing would be tough to accomplish in packed prison cellblocks."

Well, the MDOC did its part, but Governor Whitmer didn't do her part.

Yes, the state prison population was reduced.

These two things primarily made that happen. 1), Even with its limited personnel and resources during the budget crisis, the Michigan Parole Board stepped up efforts to release eligible inmates. And 2), the department temporarily stopped taking new prisoners from county jails.

That made a huge difference.

However, the "scrambling" should have been done in the Governor's office. It didn't happen. I've been hammering on this topic on our blog since the virus scare began. Many, many prisoners could be released with absolutely no threat to the public!

You could start with those 80 years old and older. Add the sick and dying. Add lifers who have served 40+ years. Add those serving long, indeterminate sentences. Add battered women serving excessive sentences. The list goes on and on.

That kind of reduction would save dollars, protect lives, and make a whole lot of sense.

Tell your Governor!

Congratulations Class of 2020!

Calvin Prison Initiative

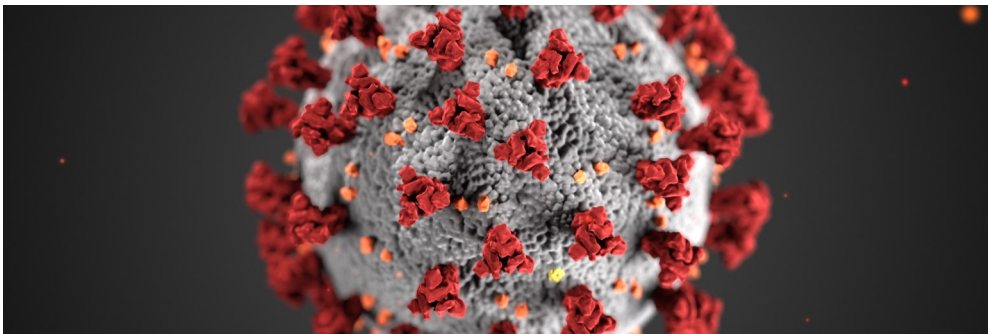


Calvin Students Graduate 7 HFP Clients in graduating class

Public commencement exercises were canceled because of the coronavirus problem, but 13 college students graduated this spring while behind bars! An amazing accomplishment!

Our congratulations to Armondo Benavidez, Eric Boldizar, Patrick Campbell, David Clark, Ryan Colter, Larry Conic, Shawn England, Gordon Dustin, Mark Hartman, Grady Hudson, David Payne, Raymond Potts and Frederick Switzer!

Each one of these men graduated from Calvin University with Bachelor's Degree in Faith and Community Leadership with a Social Work minor. Calvin Prison Initiative is based in the Richard A. Handlon CF in Ionia.



COVID-19 in the MDOC

Statistics as of June 17, 2020

Prisoner Cases: 3,982

Employee Cases: 372

Prisoner Deaths: 68

Employee Deaths: 2

Michigan has the 3rd most prisoner deaths (2nd highest per capita) in the US behind only the Federal system and Ohio

Recommended summer read

It's the perfect book to read during the Black Lives Matter movement!

Maurice

Carter's story,

in the book

SWEET FREE-

DOM, is a bit

different from

that of George

Floyd. He was-

n't killed by a

knee on his

neck. But, he

was killed by

the state. In-

adequate, in-

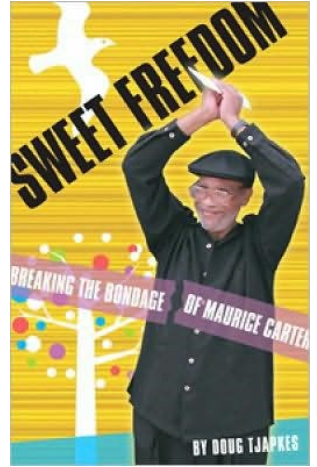
appropriate, healthcare for an indi-

gent black man serving time for a

crime he didn't commit. His life mat-

tered, and his story is important! Or-

der your copy now.



A grateful parolee

I am leaving here soon...going home after 23 years. Wanted to leave a note to say thank you all very much for all you do for us! I am truly grateful that you have been there for me several times. Your light makes our lives better. So nice that someone cares and understands. I hope your lives are truly blessed. Always remember and never forget---peace lives where love grows. Thank you all for shining your light on us. Love, Gary

A question from behind bars

Has anyone asked you what the visits will be like when (if?) they resume?

There is a rumor here

that we'll lose face-

to-face visits, instead

going to video visits.

I hope this isn't true.

While a video may

suffice for someone

serving short time, those of us who

may have decades yet ahead of us

this would be a tragedy for any

meaningful outside contact.

