

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Wayne had a good Thanksgiving!

It was late afternoon, *the day before Thanksgiving*, when he called us. He had just been granted a parole, had just landed in a half-way house only to discover that he had no wardrobe. With no family or friends to fall back on, he remembered that HUMANITY FOR PRISONERS had been at his side in the past. Even though he was miles away, in the City of Benton Harbor, within an hour-and-a-half, Wayne had shirts, pants and shoes!

Joyce had a good Christmas!

In June we discovered that **Joyce** was unable to visit her two sons in prison due to unpaid traffic tickets. Thanks to heroic assistance by Equal Justice Under Law and The Marshall Project, more than \$2,000 was raised to help this elderly woman, who is also battling cancer. The last fine paid in December, and Joyce is now working to get her name on the prison visiting lists. When that is accomplished, she will be visiting her sons for the first time in three years!

Tony will have a Happy New Year!

In March we learned that Tony, a Michigan prisoner suffering from sleep apnea, was struggling through the night without his CPAP breathing device. He had been diagnosed in 2013, one year before his incarceration, and had been using the machine for a year. Then, when he was admitted to the Michigan Prison System, a doctor for the MDOC refused to let him have the CPAP. It took our team of specialists 9 months to work through all of this, present the medical proof to the warden and prison doctor, and make the case. A few weeks ago came the message from Tony: The CPAP has arrived!

It is a self-help maxim of the privileged to say, "Don't sweat the small stuff." But the folks at the bottom have to. (Fr Greg Boyle)

HFP: Helping folks at the bottom to "sweat the small stuff!"

I have never seen anything like your organization. All kinds of people go into the prisons with Bibles. Nobody takes care of the guys with cancer, the guys with AIDS!

Comments from the wife of an elderly Michigan inmate who was recently granted parole after serving more than 40 years (HFP testified on his behalf at the Parole Board Public Hearing)

On new MDOC mail policy

In the holiday season, HFC received this message on a two-inch strip of plain white paper

I looked all over the place for a commercially produced, non-multi-fold card with nothing pasted, taped, or joined together; with no stamps, stickers, or adhesives; with white paper less than 6" X 8" in size; with no lipstick, no foreign or unknown substance, and no unusual stains, body fluids, perfumes, or oils; but this was all I could find that wouldn't violate the new mail policy. I hope 2018 is better for everyone. Chuck

"Compassion without confrontation fades quickly to fruitless sentimental commiseration."

Henry J Nouwen

From the desk of Doug: Black and White

It was temping.

Flashy, colorful, front page for the first newsletter of the new year! Smiling faces of new team members, delightful presentation of a prisoner's work of art, impressive chart showing the dramatic increase in HFP activities.

But then the words of Fr. Greg Boyle re-echoed: **It is a self-help maxim of the privileged to say,**



"Don't sweat the small stuff." But the folks at the bottom have to.

Yep, we'll still include all this color. You'll see it when you turn over this sheet. But for the front cover: stark black-and-white, just like prison bars. This is where we work, and I hope these three short accounts help to tell the story of what we really do. HFP has been down at the bottom with these folks, to help them "sweat the small stuff!" I'm proud to say that's where we were 7 days a week in 2017. It was difficult choosing just three stories. We have many, many more!

So we enter a new year with cautious optimism. We know just how busy we'll be. That's a given. The unknown has to do with our potential growth, because expansion is no longer an option.

Keep us on your prayer list in 2018, and if possible, keep us on your charitable giving list as well.

Our Board of Directors has demonstrated its recommitment to ongoing compassion and assistance to these folks at the bottom, in the name of Jesus.

Please join hands with us to tackle 2018 with enthusiasm!

Humanity for Prisoners Team Updates

Holly Honig-Josephson, appointed Vice President of Humanity for Prisoners



Russ Bloem, Vice President for Enrollment Management at Calvin College, appointed to a 3-year term on HFP's Board of Directors

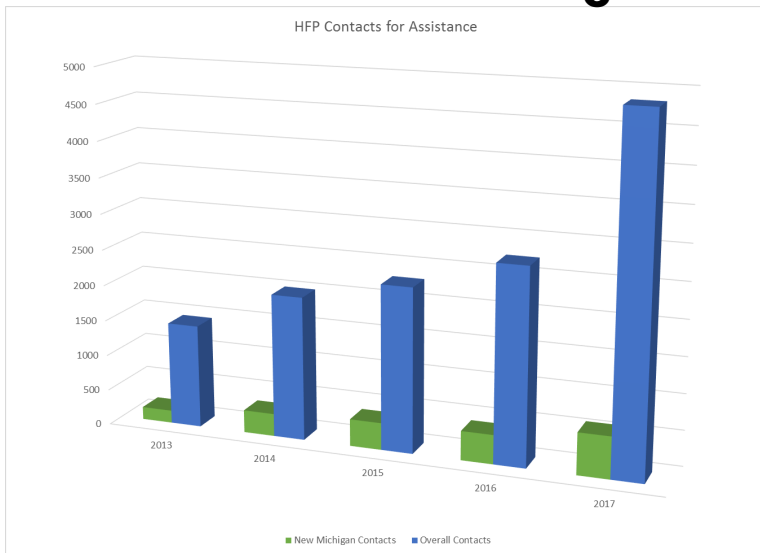


Mike Scripps, Grand Haven businessman, appointed to a 3-year term on Board of Directors



HFP President Doug Tjapkes presents the Rev. Dr. Jared Cramer a painting of his church, St. John's Episcopal of Grand Haven, thanking him for three years of distinguished service on our Board of Directors. The painting was done by Michigan inmate Duane (DJ) Montney

2017 - A Record Breaking Year



HFP staff and volunteers now responding to more than 100 calls per week!

The Tragedy of it:

An elderly inmate here asked me to help her as she is unable to hold her bowels through "count time." She requested a "frequent bathroom detail" but was told the MDOC no longer honors or gives these out. This woman has served 23 years, and they merely handed her a box of diapers to use. Think of it. How would you like to sit in crap inside a 60-square-foot room with another person? Inhumane! Will you help?

By Michigan Inmate Joseph Gill

Some people who call themselves friend are like LEAVES: They ONLY last for a season.

Another type of friend is like BRANCHES: They are not sure how much they can take. Some branches, weighted down, will bend and snap off. In other words, they will break away from you; from the tree itself.

The final parts are the ROOTS which go down deep. These are people who want to see you succeed and achieve the best in life. They want to help in any way they can. They are there to instruct and guide you. They are people who DO NOT want recognition. Their desire is to help you get to where you need to be.

The reality of it:

Please erase my earlier message. If we complain, they will put that girl on the west side and she is too old to take that chaos. It is gladiator school over there. She will just have to wear the diaper. I am sorry for her, but I can't help her.

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