

Welcome



HFP Open House

Wednesday, June 5 5-7 PM

14998 Cleveland Street, Suite D - Spring Lake

Free Refreshments - Meet the team!

Blessing of the building ceremony April 19, 2019

Prayer excerpts

For our building:

...a space where people are remembered, a light for those waiting in the darkness of despair, a reservoir of restoration for those who have been wrongly convicted.

For our team:

...protect those who labor here for justice. Encourage them in the face of indifference and injustice. Remind them that even when the wrong seems oft so strong, you are the ruler yet.

For our mission:

May compassion flow from this space into every prison cell, into the heart of every prisoner and prison staff member.



We dedicate this space to the coming of your perfect kingdom. We commit this space toward the day when justice rolls on like a river, and righteousness like a never-failing stream.

Come and fill this space for your glory and for the restoration of your world. Bring provision, wisdom, courage, energy, and love, which binds them all together perfectly.

Rev. Nate Visker, Ferrysburg Community Church

Introducing our new President

Matt Tjapkes was named the new President and CEO of Humanity for Prisoners. This action was taken by HFP's Board of Directors on April 19, 2019. Matt succeeds his father, Doug Tjapkes, who founded HFP in 2001.



From the desk of Doug:

HFP: Not religious Very Christian!

"Is yours a Christian radio station?"



That's one of the first questions I often heard when people learned that I was in the broadcasting business. My

response was always the same: "WGHN is not a religious radio station, but it is a Christian station." By that, I meant that we operated on Christian principles.

The question used to rankle me, because I had worked in "Christian" radio where they pumped out religious programming all day, but where business practices and ways of treating employees were not always so Christian.

My radio station was there to serve everyone in the community, regardless of individual beliefs, and to do so with integrity.

The story of HFP is quite similar. When people hear that we are sometimes called a prison ministry, they immediately assume that we are teaching and preaching Christianity. And that is just not the case. Wonderful agencies are already doing that. We're here to serve all prisoners in Michigan with their personal needs and problems. We're unique in that respect.

Says German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer: "**Where reason is indignant, where our nature rebels, where our piety anxiously keeps us away: that is precisely where God loves to be...**

"God is near to lowliness; he loves the lost, the neglected, the unseemly, the excluded, the weak and broken."

That's HFP. That's who we are. That's who we serve. That's the ministry your partnership with us supports.

Free Yarn: Some like it, some don't!

HFP Board Member Judy VanderArk, who, with husband Pete, recently delivered two giant carts full of yarn to the G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility in Jackson. The unused spools of yarn, collected from an area carpet factory, go to the prison hobby craft program. Inmates knit and crochet items for various charitable organizations. Each year HFP donates thousands of pounds of yarn to Michigan prisons.

Most responses are like this:

Thanks again for the yarn delivery last week. Please know how appreciative I am that you took so much time out of your day to drive so far. I want you to know I definitely plan on sending some bears to you as soon as I can get them out of the prison. I will make sure to send something for the new HFP office also. God bless.

Ellen Pach, Operation Teddy Bear, Macomb Correctional Facility

Except from the women's prison:

When we received yarn previously it was primarily wool, the prisoners were saying they were allergic to it and was breaking out from it, as well as their cell mates. The class who received the yarn said they would prefer not to work with this type of yarn again, most of them couldn't work with it. We've decided not to use the yarn this time. I've been in this position close to three years now and remember receiving the yarn only once; afterwards I was inundated with complaints from the prisoners.

Donna Butler, Coordinator, WHV



What Prisoners Say

Gratitude

Small victories are nearly as sweet as the big ones. Today I received a letter from the parole board admitting their pre-screen was incorrect, the changes have been made to the summary report, and that both it and my letter have been added to my central office file. This is only the second time in 34 years the board has responded to a letter I've sent. I feel like tacking it to my bulletin board. So, thank you yet again for your help. Had HFP not gotten my summary, who knows how these small errors may have turned into big denials in the future?

Praise for Doug's New Book, Humanity for Prisoners?

Your book is very important in highlighting the many issues and indignities that prisoners still face. Your book also offers hope as it shows that you and the rest of the Humanity for Prisoners staff will continue to fight for and give a voice to the dignity, respect, and humanity that all prisoners deserve. I am also writing a research paper for my pastoral care class about grief, loss, and trauma in prison and your book is a valuable resource. *So, thank you again for being a voice for those whose voices are too often silenced.* Eric

Hicks Video

Hear the actual words of James Hicks, recently released after serving 35 years in prison, in this new 4-minute video. Go to www.humanityforprisoners.org and click on "videos" for James' Story. Hicks' release climaxed a 14-year effort by HFP Founder Doug Tjapkes, prompting one of his peers in the prisoner advocacy business to say:

YOU, my friend are in (and stay in) the ring like few I know. I see your bruises from the battle but mostly I see your gutsy determination and heart to DO WHAT IS RIGHT! You are the poster child for what an advocate looks like... and when I grow up, I wanna be just like you. Until then, I'll keep studying and learning from really courageous people like you.

Kickbacks to the MDOC? Where do they go?

The department receives 5 cents for every e-mail sent, \$10 for every tablet computer sold, and 50 percent of printing fees if prisoners choose to save e-mails on paper. For each \$100 care package, the department receives \$19. If someone purchases \$100 worth of commissary goods, that's another \$19. Chris Gautz, a spokesman for the department, said that all commissions are deposited into its Prisoner Benefit Fund, which may be used to pay only for items that serve prisoners, like cable TV and exercise equipment. "Michigan has never looked at [commissions] as a revenue generator," he said.

Tim Requarth, THE NATION, America's oldest weekly news magazine.

Our note: But, PBFs have little oversight, and vary by facility.

Our Thanks to Park Christian Reformed Church in Holland

Deacons recently voted to take three special offerings for HFP in 2019. The first was taken Easter Sunday, where kind and generous supporters donated \$692.00!

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