

## Meet Mark!

**From HFP client to HFP CEO... Mark Hartman takes over!**



Mark D. Hartman, of Middleville, Michigan, is the new Executive Director, President, and CEO of Humanity for Prisoners (HFP). The announcement was made by Board Chair Russ Bloem.

Mark has an impressive professional history, including 10 years of service in the commercial nuclear power industry and as a consultant to the U.S. Department of Energy. He then joined the Boeing Company and spent 12 years in the aerospace and defense industry, where he held the position of Global Data Privacy Program Manager. For the past two years he has served as an Enterprise Resource Planning system implementation Core team member and Production Supervisor for RoMan Manufacturing Inc. of Grand Rapids. He holds a Master of Business Administration degree from Seattle University, a Bachelor of Science in Construction Management from Syracuse University, and more recently a Bachelor of Arts in Faith and Community Leadership with a minor in Social Work from Calvin University.

Here's the part of Mark's history that caught the attention of the HR Committee: He was incarcerated in the Berrien County Jail and Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) at prisons in Jackson, Muskegon, and Ionia for 12 years between 2008 and 2020! Incarceration proved to have a transformative effect in his life and mission, all of which began with a 2009 letter leading to a chance meeting with HFP founder, Doug Tjapkes.

While in custody with MDOC, Mark led efforts within prison communities to work on behalf of disenfranchised groups as an inside HFP liaison. He helped facilitate communications between HFP staff and clients, constituents, community organizations, and elected officials to improve quality of life issues and respond to prisoner health emergencies throughout Michigan.

After getting a slow start due to some health issues, he's anxious to get up-to-speed. Welcome aboard, Mark!

## Meet Liz!

**HFP's new Intake Specialist settles in**



Walk in our door now, and there'll be a new face at the reception desk to greet you! Elizabeth Koches, of Spring Lake, says: "I have always enjoyed working on projects that I am passionate about. When I heard about the mission of HFP, I instantly wanted to be part of the team. I look forward to working with prisoners and their families!"

## From the Desk of Doug: Coincidence? Not a Chance!

Those who know me also know that I have no belief in coincidence. Things happen for a reason.



It wasn't coincidence that Mark ended up in Brooks CF in 2008.

It wasn't coincidence that a fellow inmate, realizing his situation, shared a copy of the book *SWEET FREEDOM*, written by Doug Tjapkes. The stories and names sounded so familiar, because the system of injustice in Berrien County that had railroaded Maurice Carter was the same one that played a cruel trick on Mark!

It wasn't a coincidence that Mark doggedly pursued finding the book's author, and that he and Doug became close friends over a period of time.

It wasn't coincidence that, with the influence and encouragement of a couple of Doug's preacher friends, Mark graduated from Prison Fellowship and Calvin University courses while still behind bars.

It wasn't coincidence that the position of HFP President became vacant after Mark's release.

It wasn't coincidence that the HR Committee recommended the appointment of Mark as our new CEO.

And, Praise God, it wasn't coincidence that the Board of Directors named Mark Hartman to that position! He's only the third person in the 22-year history of HUMANITY FOR PRISONERS to serve in that role of leadership.

That didn't happen by chance!

## Meet Sarah!

### Former prison teacher joins HFP board



Sarah Cale, M.Ed.; MLIS, is a Family Counselor with Highfields, a non-profit organization that serves families referred through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Many of the families she serves have been impacted by the criminal justice system. Sarah first worked with incarcerated individuals while employed as an Adjunct Faculty member teaching college courses at three Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) facilities. A native of Southeast Michigan, when she's not working with families, she enjoys spending time with her own family which includes three stepchildren, two rescue dogs, one Berger Picard, four rescue cats, including one from a local prison, and last but not most definitely not least, one husband and fellow activist, Dr. Gary Cale. She'll serve a 3-year term on the HFP Board of Directors. A splendid addition!

## We Met Ba' Boy!

### After spending 46 years behind bars, James walks out



HFP Founder Doug Tjapkes and President Mark Hartman were on hand at the Earnest C. Brooks CF in Muskegon on April 18 when James O'Neal walked out. For this 67-year-old inmate, it was the first time in 46 years that he stepped outside as a free man with no cuffs or shackles! O'Neal had been an HFP client for years, and he was also a personal friend of Doug and Mark.

## Prison Email Miscellany

**Prison visitation improvements at WHV:** *Whatever you done for our visit processing thank you. As of yesterday they started processing them 20 minutes before the visit begins. AND our visitors are in the visiting room before we are and we are in at the time the visit is to begin. The women that had one yesterday were so excited that they processed their visits timely and they were able to have complete visits with their families! Thank you so much for speaking for the women in here. We appreciate all of you at HFP.*

**Culinary creativity:** *A neighbor gave me a square of the deep-dish pizza he made. He used tortillas and regular white bread for his crust, and it did a surprisingly tasty job. I've tried others' recipes with crackers, both soda and Ritz-type, and it comes out too crumbly or too much like Play-Doh. This was about the best yet, so I'll be copying his technique the next time my Bunkie and I are looking for something different from the usual bagels, burritos, and nachos.*

**A taste of his own medicine:** *In the stall next to me some youngster was complaining about a tooth hurting and though the dentist could find nothing wrong, he insisted he be given the strongest pain medication possible. When the dentist told him he'd have to buy some Tylenol from the store, the kid became loudly indignant, saying he owed \$20,000 in restitution. That's when this little strawberry blond, a dental assistant, asked him whose fault it was that he owed so much money? Oh, but a dropped pin would have sounded like a thunderclap! Before he could muster up a reply, she hustled him out to the waiting guard, leaving us to chuckle about responsibility. It felt good to be around right-thinking people for a change!*

### "Those in Prison" by Susan Zalatan

We want them to be responsible  
So we take away all responsibility  
We want them to be positive and constructive  
So we degrade them and make them useless  
We want them to be trustworthy  
So we put them where there is no trust  
We want them to be nonviolent  
So we surround them with violence  
We want them to be kind and loving  
So we subject them to hatred and cruelty  
We want them to quit being the "tough guy"  
So we put them where only the "tough guy" survives  
We want them to quit exploiting us  
So we cage them where they exploit each other  
We want them to take control of their lives  
So we make them dependent on us  
We want them to be a part of our community  
So we separate them from our community  
You want us to have self-worth  
So you destroy our self-worth  
And you call it "corrections"

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