

Happy Birthday, HFP!

HFP bylaws signed August 29, 2001



After all attempts to reenter radio broadcasting failed, HFP founder Doug Tjapkes reluctantly agreed to start a new organization to assist the incarcerated. The idea came from his friend Maurice Carter, who at that time was still behind bars for a crime he did not commit. The organization's name, INNOCENT, was changed to HUMANITY FOR PRISONERS IN 2008 to more accurately reflect the agency's mission. Our office location over the years moved from Grand Rapids, to Muskegon, to Grand Haven, and finally to our very own office condo in Spring Lake. Doug worked part-time for INNOCENT, while continuing his occupation as a seller of church organs, at the beginning. We've now expanded to a team of 7, assisted by a bevy of volunteers, handling hundreds of calls per month, and touching the lives of thousands of Michigan prisoners! Doug admits now that his first two occupations were merely preparation for this one.

A Birthday Gift for HFP

Our very own oral historian

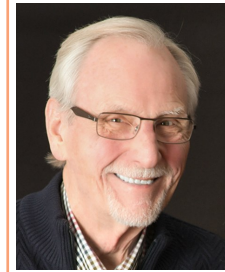


Meet Girbe Eefsting

Girbe Eefsting, Owner of Film Farm, is now a member of the HFP team! This producer/director has been a professional filmmaker since 1973. His vast professional experiences include all forms of production such as educational media, corporate media, commercial production, documentary and entertainment. CEO Mark Hartman promises that we'll be seeing a lot of Girbe's work in the future, as his cameras and microphones document the history and growth of HFP.

From the Desk of Doug:

The HFP story It's a good one!



22 years ago, when HFP got its start, I was still working for Westfield Organ Company. Owner Rob

Feenstra was kind enough to let me have a second desk and a second phone for this fledgling prisoner program.

In 2004 I began working full-time on behalf of the incarcerated, with the occasional assistance of an intern.

As we continued to grow, we never had time to tell our story well. Our limited staff was too busy trying to work with and assist people behind bars who had special needs. True, we occasionally took time to relate a success story to our supporters and donors. But, for the most part, our time could best be spent with compassionate outreach to "the least of these."

Well, all of that is about to change! In perhaps one of his most effective and far-reaching early decisions, new CEO Mark Hartman has added a professional videographer to our team. And, Girbe Eefsting is not just a professional camera man. He's an outstanding oral history documentarian!

HFP has a great story to tell... a story that can be told not only by staff members, but also by volunteers, by prisoners, by former prisoners, by family members of the incarcerated. And, also by those who believe in us and support our work.

Watch for amazing videos in the future. Prepare to be impressed!

Meet Julia Hyde



As a member of the Client Service department for HFP, Julia devotes her time to answering information requests from prisoners. Although a newer member of the HFP team, Julia has quickly proven to be compassionate, articulate, and ready to help! As an undergraduate film student Julia has an empathetic world view that serves us well here at HFP.

Important State Updates

CO body cams coming

From Bridge Michigan: *Prison reform advocates are pleased with the Legislature's approval of \$7.1 million in the state budget to provide body cameras for correctional officers and other staffers to wear in the state prison system. A similar program in Florida led to a 70-percent reduction in allegations of excessive force.*

Good Time still alive

Also from Bridge Michigan: *Michigan's Board of State Canvassers has given the go-ahead for the Michigan Justice Advocacy to move forward with a petition to institute a "good time" credit system for prisoners. The measure would subtract 30 days from a prisoner's sentence for every 30 days they don't commit a serious misconduct.*

Donate to our work today!



Glimpses Behind Bars

Excerpts from prisoner letters to HFP

A new low in trying to reach a high!

Well, they've caught guys waiting for the exterminator to spray the building and rushing to put strips of paper along the walls. After the bug people leave the room the fiends pick up the strips, dry them, and then roll them up and smoke them. Straight up poison right to the brain. I can't make this level of craziness up. Me? The only substance I still want to abuse is ice cream. Chocolate chip mint, please. And lots of it. LOL.

More price increases for Michigan prisoners

The greedy Keefe Corp. has done it AGAIN! They've raised our store prices for a third time in six months. As it is, I can at least buy a jar of peanut butter on three days' pay with a bit of change left over, but a kitchen worker has to work three hours to just buy a single Ramen Noodle. Worse yet, these people cut more workers' pay, like dropping the maintenance crew to a \$1.14/day from a \$1.77, which for some was an even more drastic reduction than what dog handlers and upholstery shop workers lost. Generic cheese crunchies in an 11oz bag now costs \$2.81 which is nearly a 50-cent jump and makes them a special movie/event treat.

Racism Reality

Nothing in American history is more tragic surely than the relationship of the black and white races. Masters and slaves both were dehumanized. The Jim Crow laws carried the process on for decades beyond the Emancipation. The Ku Klux Klan and its like keep going forever. Politically, economically, socially, humanly black people continue to be the underdog. Despite all the efforts of both races to rectify the situation and heal the wounds, despite all the progress that has been made, it is still as hard for any black person to look at any white person without a feeling of resentment as it is for any white person to look at any black person without a feeling of guilt.

- Frederick Buchner

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