

Clemency!

Year-end grants by governor total 22!

Strong supporters of clemency were heartened by Governor Whitmer's year-end action, granting 4 pardons and 18 sentence commutations. These included a couple of firsts: the first pardons issued during her first term, and the first commutations for persons convicted of violent crimes.

We're proud to report that 8 of the 18 persons to receive commutations were clients of HFP! They are: **John Aslin, who served 38 years; Lu Anne Szenay, who served 32; Jimmy Burden, 39 years; LaDonna Cummings, 15 years; Michael Landers, 9 years; Monika McCain, 17 years; Eboni Spight, 17 years; and Raymond Saenz, Jr., who served 27 years.**



Following the governor's approval, sentences are reduced, and inmates become eligible for parole.

Grateful HFP clients respond:

- John Aslin: ***Thank you for all the support and prayers over the years!***
LuAnne Szenay: ***Thank you for being my superheroes!***
LaDonna Cummings: ***Thank you! You believed in me when I did not!***
Eboni Spight: ***Thank you for your support. I appreciate you so much!***
Monika McCain: ***Thank you! I am so excited to have a second chance!***

Helping is what we do!

The HFP team helps clients in the Michigan prison system with much more than commutation applications. With more than 2 decades of experience, we've compiled information gleaned from our experiences and those of clients into handy, helpful packets.

For the person behind bars:

- How to prepare for a meeting with the Parole Board
- What to expect in a public hearing

For friends and family:

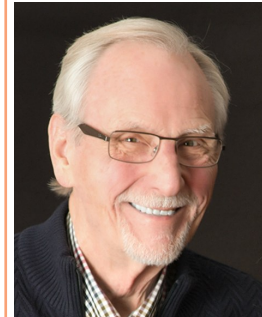
- How to write a support letter
- How to assist in filing a FOIA request
- How to prepare for a prison visit

We can help with these and many more topics, and we're preparing even more handy guidelines for the future! Go to our website at www.humanityforprisoners.org, or call our office at (616) 935-0075.

From the Desk of Doug:

February Memories Black/White History Month!

One does a lot of reflecting near the end of life. Black History



Month is meant to be a time when we pay tribute to the generations of African Americans

who struggled with adversity to achieve full citizenship. I like this observance to remind me just how barren my 86 years would have been *without* the presence of African American friends.

I can't begin to list them all. I'll forget a name or two and offend someone. But, I can mention the names of a couple people who changed my life.

The Rev. Cy Young was a guest on my radio show in the 70s. I treasured the friendship that followed that meeting. He had memorized the speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, and, in subsequent months, I booked gigs for him time and again! He was a smash! His rendition of I HAVE A DREAM rivaled that of Dr. King!

I'm unable to list all of the lessons he taught me, but his total commitment to bridging the gap between Blacks and Whites was contagious. I caught it!

Two decades later, I met Maurice Carter. The rest is history. With these two men in my life, my family caught the fever. Cy and Maurice became a part of our extended family.

In Black History Month, 2023, I give thanks to God for the presence of Black in this White boy's background!

From Ypsilanti

Sad news from WHV

I am so sorry to inform you that within one week's time we have had 2 Lifers pass away. Both of these older ladies served many years behind the wall incarcerated well over 30/45 years. We send our prayers & special thoughts to their families & their Loved ones. These two women have raised some of us lifers behind these MDOC walls. It is so unfortunate that WHV doesn't even allow us to have any sort of memorial services for our sisters who pass away here. Both women were housed in the infirmary. Both were elderly & both were inspirational to others for many, many years. Please pray with us & for us in our struggles as we grieve our sisters who have passed away.

From Saginaw

Delightful holiday story from SRF

Kudos to the as yet unknown individual who bought everyone in this unit a bag of Christmas candies which others passed out during count time. He spent \$192.00 to do what he felt the Lord was telling him to do. Now, what makes this even more remarkable is that, due to court-imposed restitution, he only gets \$50.00 per month! Several of us have our feelers out trying to figure out who he is so we can put together a cosmetic and food box for him. The guys who passed the candy out aren't talking, so the mystery is a compelling one to solve.

From Muskegon

Tragic report from MCF

A middle-aged inmate has died after being taken to the hospital with severe flu-like symptoms. His situation is an extreme outcome of the ways MDOC has weaponized covid against prisoners. The man got sick and delayed and delayed in going to health services. He delayed because MDOC now puts inmates and their bunkies in the hole if they show signs of covid, and a visit requires a \$5 co-pay. These punishments for being sick are MDOC's way of preventing inmates from using covid as some kind of "malingering." Meanwhile, truly sick people have many good reasons for not seeking help, while they get worse and worse. My friend will not be filing a grievance, as inmates often fear retaliation for doing that.

Emotions by Krystal Clark #435064

Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility
that's supposed to be the place
I was sentenced to do time
Ha, the time that constantly
has me in a bind
not allowing me to utilize
my mind
and treat me as if I'm blind
Blind to the fact y'all don't really
give a f@#k
Y'all don't care if I live or die
I come to you all in a constant cry
I'm dying inside and out
I know you can see it in me without a doubt
You see all that shit on the walls
yeah that's feces and mold
gosh it has my breath in a hold
It's so bad it has me scared to breathe sometimes
feels like I have something stuck in my throat
and at any moment I could choke
Look at my swollen face my eyes are now black
my health is deteriorating
damn this place is wack
a lot of times I feel like it's going to give
me a heart attack
My body feels like an ocean of constant flowing
pain
my prayers and family are the only things keeping
me sane
I have to bare the fact y'all don't care
but it's alright
I'm going to continue to fight
no matter how tough the strife
you can call me Ford " Build Strong To Last"
because I'm in this race to the bitter end
no giving up because I plan to win
no matter what I'm never giving up.

Prison is a crash course in the darker side of life. Few survive it without becoming a different person: more cynical, jaded, fearful, angry. It's hard to trust again, hard to believe, easy to hate a system that destroyed your life beyond the pompous pretense of saving you from yourself for your own good.

Peter McWilliams, author

Donate today at [HumanityForPrisoners.org](https://www.HumanityForPrisoners.org)