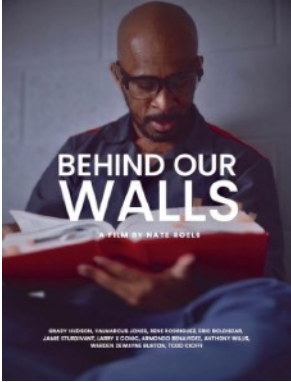


Be a Sponsor!



You and/or your company can be a sponsor for HFP's brand new autumn gala: THE VOICES OF HUMANITY! The film festival will be held Friday, Oct. 27, 2023, 7 p.m. at Central Park Place (formerly Grand Haven Community Center), 421 Columbus Ave., Grand Haven.

The program will feature a showing of Grand Rapids filmmaker Nathan Roels' award-winning 45-minute production, Behind Our Walls, the video that tells the powerful stories of eight persons residing in Michigan's Handlon Correctional Facility and the educational program through Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary that brought them together. Tickets are \$20.

BUT, if you choose to be a sponsor, you'll get even more!

- Star Sponsor (\$100-\$200): 1 reserved seat ticket, pre-program dinner & reception
- Headliner Sponsor (\$200-\$499): 2 tickets, two dinner & reception reservations
- Director Sponsor (\$500-\$999): 6 tickets, 6 dinner/reception reservations
- Producer Sponsor (\$1,000-\$4,999): 8 VIP tickets and 8 dinner reservations
- Executive Producer (\$5,000+): 12 VIP tickets and 12 dinner reservations.

Send your sponsorship check to HFP, PO Box 687, Grand Haven, MI, 49417, or donate online at HumanityForPrisoners.org.

Michigan Legislative Updates

Help for returning citizens

House Bill 4534 would require the Michigan Department of Corrections to provide both identification and information about voter registration to people who have been convicted of felonies upon their release from prison. An estimated 6,500 people incarcerated in Michigan's prison system are expected to be released this year, according to the Department of Corrections, and 95 percent of them will be

Continued on next page

From the Desk of Doug

HFP Retreat

Smiling, frowning, dreaming!



HFP learned many years ago that, for continuous success and growth, an organization needs a solid strategy plan. It was good advice, and it worked! HFP is doing amazing things, providing amazing services, and touching an amazing number of lives! But, this year it was time for reassessment.

It would be impossible to hold productive meetings in our office building. Messages arrive non-stop throughout the day, and interruptions would be frequent. That's why our planners chose Calvin University's Prince Conference Center for an all-day retreat last month. The venue was perfect and the event was a smashing success! (See next page.)

We smiled as we heard the stories from people behind bars who were helped by HFP, and whose actions and attitudes were impacted by the compassionate response of our team.

We frowned as we learned of the huge backlog of email requests arriving in our office, much of this due to a staff shortage. We take pride in prompt response, and incarcerated people take this for granted. Our reputation is important, so we will be accelerating our efforts to beef up staff and get caught up.

We loved to dream about the future. Some ideas can and may be quickly implemented Others are still in the possibility stage.

Thanks to facilitators Marla Mitchell-Cichon and Aaron Yore-Van Oosterhout, HFP will have a new and impressive Strategic Plan, and an exciting future!

— Doug Tjapkes, Founder

Continued from previous page

released on parole. If passed by the state legislature, the bill would help newly released people by equipping them with identification and preparing them to vote at the ballot box.

Controversial idea on hold

Michigan Democrats are pausing a controversial plan that would have allowed prisoners to shave time off their sentences by obtaining degrees. Inner-party divisions and legal questions dogged the proposal, but sponsors say it will return.

(Bridge Magazine)

Sad, but Typical

HFP Client Douglas Burgess relates a shameful tale, typical of the kind we often hear, and underscoring the reason why we try to assure every inmate that he or she matters!

"It's nearly impossible in here to be seen as anything other than a sub-human. A perfect example is when I graduated with my master's degree. The Warden and the Principal arranged to have me receive my diploma during a GED/ Trade School graduation. It was the first degree where I got to wear my robe and shake hands. I was also asked to give an exhortation speech to the graduates before the keynote address by the MDOC's deputy director at the time. Heady stuff! However, as we were leaving, the Annex officer who was returning passes to us stopped me, and in a loud voice so everyone could hear, said, 'Burgess, I don't care how many degrees you get, you'll always be the fuzz stuck to the gum stuck to the bottom of my shoe.' Talk about trying to deflate one of my greatest moments. But that's the label that gets stuck to people in here, and while I know such attitudes exist, it still stings knowing that no matter what I do all some people will ever see is a convict. Thankfully, as I've gotten older, the opinions of others are not what I allow to define who I've become."



HFP Retreat

"Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago." —Warren Buffett

Doug Tjapkes planted the HFP tree 22 years ago. Our Policy and Planning Committee held an all-day retreat for the staff and directors in September, to discuss:

- Where we've been
- What we've done right
- What we could do better
- Where we're going!

Panel Discussion

To discuss our roots and our services, Facilitators Marla Mitchell-Cichon and Aaron Yore-Van Oosterhout orchestrated an outstanding panel featuring Doug Tjapkes, HFP Founder; and former HFP clients Heather Moore, Gilbert Poole, and Mark Hartman. Heather's husband had been locked up for 16 years, Gil was in a cage for 32 years for a crime he did not commit, and Mark — who also claimed wrongful conviction — spent 12 years in prison. Sixty-one years of incarceration represented on that panel! All related personal experience with HFP's "action with compassion."

Small Groups:

Our strengths, our weaknesses, our needs

Board members were instructed to sit at tables with a staff member for frank discussions regarding our work and our mission.



Co-facilitators Aaron Yore-Van Oosterhout and Marla Mitchell-Cichon

HFP Staff: Mark Hartman, Susie Greenbauer, Sarah Ebidon



First great grandbaby for Doug! Meet Boston Maxwell Stone!