Annual Report 2013-2014
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Rich Rienstra

I became a member of the Board of Directors in October of 2013, and President in June, 2014. I am pleased to advance the many contributions of Founder and former President, Lois DeMott, as well as of the hard-working Board of Directors and many volunteers who care about the mission of MICPR.

Together we are working to support, empower and unify prisoners’ loved ones and concerned citizens to bring quality humane treatment for all incarcerated; provide accurate information that will encourage education of our fellow citizens, communities, and elected officials; and have effective accountability that will promote safer prisons, safer public and economical cost savings.

I look forward to a new year where we can continue to expand our mission and goals so those who are incarcerated and their families can find new ways to be in partnership with one another. Please consider how you as a board member or as a volunteer can contribute to providing hope for prisoners and their families.

Join us to seek positive alternatives within the corrections systems so that everyone will benefit from working together.

Mission Statement

To support, empower, and unify prisoners’ loved ones and concerned citizens to bring quality humane treatment for all incarcerated.

To provide accurate information that will encourage education of our fellow citizens, communities, and elected officials.

To have effective accountability that will promote safer prisons, safer public, and cost savings.
MEETINGS

The Annual Meeting was held on October 19, 2013. Four new Board Members were elected. The twelve members were assigned one, two or three year terms so that they would not all expire in the same year. Peggy Christian, Monica Jahner, Linda Salinas and Lois DeMott drew one-year terms to expire in 2014. Sandy Tuinstra, Dee Florence, Mora Wilkevicz, and Sandra Girard drew two-year terms which will expire in 2015. Richard Rienstra, Rita Kerwin, Sherrie Guess and Rehanna Razack drew three-year terms which will expire in 2016. Lois was re-elected president, Sandy G. vice-president, Mora secretary, and Peggy treasurer.

Board meetings were held every other month before the general programs, except for December which was cancelled due to snow. The Board had five regular meetings over the past year. Lindsey and Rehanna resigned as they relocated to other cities and could no longer participate.

The Executive Board consists of the president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and the chairpersons of the three standing committees, Finance, Public Relations, and Program Committee. The Executive Board makes decisions between Board meetings and reports to the Board. The Executive Board met ten times during the year. At a special Board meeting on April 22, 2014, Lois DeMott announced that she had received a Soros Fellowship to build and run the Family Participation Program. She resigned as president effective May 31. Richard was unanimously elected to replace her as President.

Legislative and Policy Accomplishments

- MDOC Family Informational Packet was made available on the MDOC website pursuant to legislation advocated by CPR.
- Standard visitor restrictions for substance abuse violations were reduced from two years to 1 year.
- Legislation was adopted to require that a standardized universal medical release be created and implemented.
CPR PRIORITIES FOR 2014

The Board adopted three priorities for CPR action during 2014. They are:

- Implement a standardized universal medical release of information form for prisoners to sign.
- Further reductions to visitor restrictions for substance abuse violations.
- Establish a policy and operating procedure for recognizing court-ordered guardianships.

Members continued to meet periodically with MDOC administration at Central Office to work on addressing CPR priorities. The Director has committed to establishing a Family Advisory Board under the Family Participation Program to provide regular family input.

We have been able to meet and assist the administration in developing the new standardized medical release form and are continuing to work on the policy and procedures for its implementation. Lois met with Legislators and MDOC officials about the need for a Family Liaison Project and a guide for families. They were receptive to the ideas and the MDOC agreed to provide a letter of support for such a program.

Prisoner Family Bill of Rights and Responsibilities

The Prisoner Family Bill of Rights and Responsibilities was created prior to our Legislative Educational Day. It can be downloaded from CPR's website.

ACTIVITIES

Monthly Programs

CPR presented ten programs at the monthly educational and support meetings for family members, friends, and concerned citizens. Former warden Carol Howes and Legislative Corrections Ombudsman Keith Barber each gave a presentation about MDOC operations, policies and advice for families on advocating for their incarcerated loved one.

Monica Jahner, Reuben Kenyatta, Darryl Alexander, and Daniel Jones participated in a panel discussion about re-entry issues and the kinds of support that improve chances for success.

Soros Fellow Amanda Alexander spoke about the problems that children of incarcerated parents encounter. She is starting a Michigan chapter of WHAT (We're Here And Talking), an organization to enhance parenting opportunities and to give those children a voice through advocacy.
Dee Florence with the Disability Council of Michigan, and a Board Member of CPR, presented information on the importance of communicating and educating elected officials. She provided practical tips and a written guide on how to go about it.

Bonnie Hilberer, Founder of Healing Hearts, an organization helping families and friends deal with their grief about the conviction and incarceration of a loved one, talked about the importance of going through this process and of getting and giving support.

Board Members Sandy Tuinstra and Mora Wilkevicz described their experiences obtaining guardianships for incarcerated family members and distributed written information about the process.

Lois DeMott and Sandra Girard presented the first edition of CPR’s Resource Guide for Families, Friends, and Advocates of People Inside the MDOC. The Guide was created by several dedicated CPR members. The audience provided valuable input for additional material.

Former Representative Joan Bauer presented her insights and suggestions for providing meaningful and influential information to elected officials.

One program was spent preparing for CPR’s Legislative Educational Day and meetings with Legislators.

Grant Project

Work continued on implementing the Awesome Grant project. Lois met with Washtenaw County jail, probation, and prosecution officials. Posters with information about CPR, the Resource Guide, and contact information were created and printed. Posters were provided to the jail to be placed in the visiting area.

Although officials were enthusiastic about the Resource Guide and CPR, this project was not as successful as hoped. It became apparent that there was a need for regular on-site coordination and follow-up. CPR, a volunteer organization, has been unable to provide that ongoing supervision to date.

More of the posters were distributed for placement in churches, mental health agencies, and other community locations.

RESOURCE GUIDE

FOR FAMILIES, FRIENDS, AND ADVOCATES OF PEOPLE INSIDE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS (MDOC)

May 2014
Legislative Educational Day

CPR's Third Annual Legislative Day was sponsored by Representatives Howrylak and Bieda and Senators Santana and Pappageorge. It was held on May 13, 2014. The event was co-sponsored by many other organizations. Rep. Howrylak, Lois DeMott, Richard Rienstra, Sandra Girard, Peggy Christian, Carol Rienstra and Darryl Alexander spoke.

A couple of audience members from other organizations accepted the invitation to speak about their activities. CPR presented its top three priorities and the proposed Michigan Prisoner Family Bill of Rights and Responsibilities. The event was well attended by approximately 150 legislative and family members, and provided numerous opportunities for the public to speak with Legislators and Legislative Aides about CPR's priorities. Following lunch, CPR members met with several key Legislators and their Aides.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Walk

For the 7th straight year, CPR participated in the NAMI Walk held on September 27, 2014 in Canton. In addition to setting up the mock solitary confinement cell, 15 CPR members handed out information and shared our stories with families.
Mock Segregation Cell

CPR moved forward with redesigning its mock segregation cell. Al and Matt Christian and employees from Omnitech Solutions developed and built the new cell. It was set up for the first time at the 2014 NAMI Walk and was a huge success.

Thank you Al Christian and employees of Omnitech Solutions for your phenomenal contribution of time and financial help in revising our solitary confinement cell!

National Prisoner Family Conference

CPR helped send two members, Rita Kerwin and Woody Capron, to the National Prisoner Families Conference in Texas in March. Rita joined the Steering Committee for the 2015 Conference.

YJAM Event

October is national Youth Justice Awareness Month. CPR co-sponsored with Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency and the Association for Children’s Mental Health the second Michigan Youth Justice Awareness Month. A Proclamation was signed by the Governor and a Legislative Resolution declaring it Youth Justice Awareness Month were highlights of the efforts to bring awareness to the incarceration of youth. CPR helped deliver flyers to Michigan’s Legislators each week in October with facts and photos about the very high number of juveniles who are sentenced into Michigan’s adult prison system.
Flint Forum on Mass Incarceration
At the end of last October members took CPR’s mock segregation cell and pamphlets to Flint for a conference on Mass Incarceration. CPR members were part of a presentation at the conference as well.

Other Events
CPR co-sponsored events with MCCD, CAPPS, and Motherly Intercession.

PUBLICITY/PUBLIC RELATIONS

Assistance to Families
We assisted 13 families who contacted us through our website. Additional assistance was provided to approximately 40 families and community members who contacted us through the CPR phone line.

CPR Facebook Page
Sandy Tuinstra is the main administrator running CPR’s Facebook page. It includes information about CPR activities and meetings as well as notices of related events held by other organizations. There are currently 789 followers.

We gained 309 followers in the last year!

Website
CPR’s website provides information about meetings, links to related web sites and organizations, forms and documents, re-entry information, board of directors and the history of CPR. The highest number of daily page views numbers for this October have been October 2nd at 68 views, October 7th at 72 views and October 14th at 105 views.

Email Notifications
Notices about CPR’s meetings and other state-wide events are sent monthly. At the end of October, 489 people were on CPR’s e-mail list. CPR recently moved its email notification to the MailChimp program. If you are not receiving these notifications go to our website (www.micpr.org) and sign up.
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

INCOME

CPR’s main sources of income have been from individual donations, and donations made by organizations and individuals at the time of our Legislative Educational Day.

Donations to CPR are tax deductible.

EXPENSES

CPR’s biggest expenses has been associated with the annual Legislative Education Day and sending representatives to the National Prisoner Family Conference. Other expenses have included administrative purchases such as: business cards, brochure and copies. Additional funds went towards materials for the revised model solitary confinement cell and sponsorship of other organizations’ events.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Financial statements for the year are available separately.