

# Out Of Prison After 40 Years, Man Finds Way To Help Others

By CORINNE ABATT  
"Sometimes in a man's life, he should have a few winning marks—a few scores he's made."

James Spivey, director of "We Care," a vocational training project for ex-convicts, speaks from experience. After spending almost 40 years in Michigan prisons, he is chalking up enough winning marks to fill a school blackboard.

IT BEGAN the day he walked out the prison gate a free man. He had been asked by a counselor to take over as director of a half-way house in Detroit run by the Capuchin Fathers. From there he went to work for the Capuchin Community Center.

Soon after, he encountered Rev. Louis Gerhardt and a group from the North Congregational Church of Southfield, who were looking for a particular man to head a project to aid men newly released from prison.

"Jim Spivey was the right man," Rev. Gerhardt says. He was intimately aware of the need to which the North Church group had committed themselves.

Last June with a budget of \$5,000, a large, but very dirty room at 24 E. Elizabeth in Detroit, two boxes one for a desk and one for a stool, he opened "We Care." Even before the phone was installed, people were coming.

Since June, more than 600 men who have served time in prisons have contacted and gotten help from the program. Spivey has also worked with a number of families of men in prison.

HE IS WORKING now on establishing a busing program so families can make prison visits. Many exist on ADC \$25 cents a day for his labor.

Money for travel is out of the question. It costs \$60 for a round trip ticket to the prison at Marquette, half of many ADC food budgets for a month. Years ago he was without the man ever seeing his family.

Catholic Central High School has agreed to loan a bus for a weekend trip to Marquette. Spivey plans to arrange regular free bus transportation to all Michigan prisons. He is scouting for more buses that can be used for weekend trips.

"The welfare of his family is a great concern to a man in prison. If he lays awake at night wondering over and over how's my family doing," then he is tense and nervous. Talking to his family eases his mind. If he can see his children, feel his children, hold his children, the pressures get less, and he can think more logically.

"Not seeing his family can be just one more frustration in a long line that eventually spells total defeat. The purpose of 'We Care' is to open the doors to success once the man is released.

"OPPORTUNITIES for people like these are few and far between. We are serious about building a better society." Spivey estimates 75 per cent of prisoners dropped out of school before 10th grade. Only a taken few acquire any skills to serve them when they come out. The opportunities simply aren't available.

For example, there may be places for 20 in the machine shop and 4,000 population prison. Others who make some don't know how and very few have the patience to teach him how to live decently. "The only thing he knows is how to strike back. Then, society will say he's a five time loser, an incorrigible. The more times it happens, the worse it gets."

HE RECALLS his interview with James Spivey. "We Care" are two: training equipment and funds. Donated equipment is needed for a television repair program. He also hopes one or more automotive companies will donate material for an auto mechanic training program.

"Give a man a trade so he can raise his economic level and his life is absolutely necessary." The other need is money. Not big money; more in the realm of a modest working budget. Spivey wants to keep his operation simple, as close to person-to-person grass roots as is humanly possible. Spivey avoids bureaucracy and likes clear, common sense answers.

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hardly enough to cover cigarettes, toothpaste and razor blades. "We Care" will provide survival tools of job training and more. A feeling of confidence that he can make it, the ability to look an employer in the eye and say, "I can do the job. I can meet and handle situations."

"There isn't a human being alive who doesn't want to live decently. They miss because some don't know how and very few have the patience to teach him how to live decently. "The only thing he knows is how to strike back. Then, society will say he's a five time loser, an incorrigible. The more times it happens, the worse it gets."

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for the position at the halfway house. It had been closed twice.

"The guys there were steaming everything. They came up with the idea that someone who had served time and knew the guys might be more successful."

"I asked them to show me the rules. They gave me a folded sheet with rules on four sides. I asked them, 'Why do you feel this is necessary? Why rules? You have state laws and city laws. Why do you need rules in your house?'"

Spivey dropped the long list into the wastebasket and announced that if he ran the house, there would be two rules: keep the house clean, and maintain yourself as a human being.

ALMOST 80 men went through the house under Spivey's leadership. Only one went back to prison. The rest made it as contributing members of society. And nothing was stolen.

The functions of penal institutions he boils down to two words, "to" and "for." "When you do something to a person, then the purpose is vindictive. It is revenge. But if we, as a society, feel this person should be made into someone who will fit into society, then we must initiate social reforms that will do something for him."

"When a man has committed a crime, we should ask ourselves, 'What was the motive for the crime? Why did he do it? What were the pressures?'"

"You will find there are numerous pressures brought about by society. Maybe he didn't have a job. Society will say, 'Why didn't he find a job? But you have only to go to the employment offices and see the hundreds lined up there every day to realize that it isn't so easy."

THE PATTERN starts long before a person commits his first crime. It starts when the child drifts from the home and school which fail to have any interest in him.

To families, Spivey says: "Don't let the bird out of the nest before he can fly." About schools, he suggests: "They are lacking because there's nothing to draw him there."

He compares the necessary attitude of a stage magician or a state fair. "By all means, be creative; get him inside; get him inside; and then sock it to him!"

WHEN SCHOOLS and families fail, Spivey sees the youngster like dandelion seed blowing all directions in the wind. One of his favorite parallels is in a four part picture he keeps in his office.

In one section is an alley dog, constantly on the run always trying to find something to eat and shelter from the strong cold winds. Next is a dog someone has taken care of, well fed and trained. Below the alley dog is a section of a man without care, and in the other corner is one who has been cared for and loved.

"If we allow this dog to become a street dog, we know what he's going to do. If we allow this man to become a street dweller, we know what's going to happen to him."

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SPIVEY'S VOICE fills with pride when he speaks about his wife, Darlene, whom he married after being paroled, and his toddler son.

One of his joys this Christmas was seeing which of the toys would catch the interest and imagination of the little boy. It turned out to be a doctor kit.

"I watched him and said to myself, 'Alto, so you're leaning that way. You see, right now, I want to make sure that there's nothing more interesting than what he has at home when he goes to school, there will be something that draws him there and makes it interesting enough so that he wants to study.'"

Like the dandelion seed, James Spivey once blew in the wind. Now he wants all like him to find the pleasures of taking root and growing.

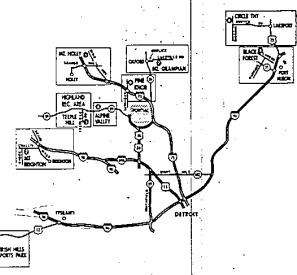
Most of the black officials surveyed felt the problems of blacks in the central cities were in some way related to, or at least were affected by the problems of the region as a whole. They further believed that regional or metropolitan action was necessary to adequately address these questions.

It is clear that intergovernmental cooperation is necessary to meet the issues and problems presented here. It is also clear that the responses of these black officials cast a shadow over the widely accepted notion that blacks feel decentralization of government programs and responsibilities is preferable to centralization.

In fact, it could be argued, except for the issues of education, police, crime and delinquency, that on most social issues these blacks surveyed felt centralization of government programs and responsibilities were preferable.

There was a persistent fear expressed that regional councils would dilute black political power. This was particularly true for those respondents outside of the South.

There was also an appearance of an unmistakable skepticism of the possibilities restored by the suburbs in solving problems of urban areas.



## Lots Of Skiing Close To Home At These Spots

Even the non-skier can appreciate the wide variety of facilities and the close-to-home convenience of southeast Michigan's nine ski lodges, according to Automobile Club of Michigan.

Several of the ski areas—within 45 minutes of southeast Michigan cities—have cocktail lounges with live entertainment. Most lodges have cafeterias and one even features a gourmet restaurant complete with a wine list.

For an adult, a day of weekend skiing will cost from \$7.50 to \$12.50, including equipment rental and lift ticket. Rates run \$2.50 less on evenings and weekdays. Two lodges offer "Ladies Day" reductions, and children under 12 can ski for reduced rates at most places.

All nine lodges offer ski instruction. Private lessons cost about \$10 a session; two people pay approximately \$5 for a shared lesson; and a lesson for three or four persons runs about \$3-\$4 apiece. Southeast Michigan's nine ski spots are:

1. IRISH HILLS Sports Park—This lodge offers ice skating, tobogganing and camping as well as skiing. The 25 campsites rent at \$3 a night, including electricity. Skating is free but no skates are provided; toboggans rent for \$1.25 plus a \$1 bill fee. The rustic lodge features a sun-deck overlooking the slopes, a cocktail lounge with evening entertainment, a cafeteria and a snack bar. Groups of 25 or more can spend the night in a 100-bed dormitory.

Open from noon-11 p.m. weekdays and from 10 a.m.-11 p.m. weekends; 20 runs, and a limited ski shop.

2. MT. BRIGHTON—In addition to two spacious cafeterias, Mt. Brighton has a charcoal grill for limited menu dining. A babysitting service is offered on weekends. Beneath the lodge's soaring wooden beams, visitors can sip cocktails and listen to live entertainment (on weekends) while viewing most of Mt. Brighton's 15 runs.

Open from 10 a.m.-10 p.m. weekdays and from 9 a.m.-11 p.m. weekends. Ski instruction includes new "graduated length" method. Limited ski shop.

3. TEEPLE HILL—Few amenities are offered at this lodge aside from a snack bar and a warming shelter. Located in the Highland Recreation Area, Teepie Hill is the only southeast Michigan lodge that has cross country skiing in addition to its 12

runs. There is no equipment rental. Open from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays only. 4. ALPINE VALLEY—New this year is a rathskeller restaurant, featuring a "wine cellar" decor. The Swiss-style lodge also has a large cocktail lounge, a snack bar, a cafeteria and a complete ski shop.

Open from 9 a.m.-11 p.m. weekdays and from 10 a.m.-11 p.m. weekends; 23 runs. Weekend entertainment in the lounge, which is open from noon-12 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays are ladies days; group discounts also available. A motel is located at the lodge entrance.

5. MT. HOLLY—A cocktail lounge with weekend entertainment is available. The lodge also has two cafeterias and two rental areas. Open from 10 a.m.-11 p.m. weekdays and from 9 a.m.-11 p.m. weekends; 10 runs and a complete ski shop. Group rates are available.

6. PINE KNOB—Deluxe dining is available at the foot of the longest slope (2,600 feet) in southeast Michigan. The lodge also has a rathskeller, a cafeteria and a cocktail lounge featuring live entertainment after 9 p.m. Ski instruction is based on the "graduated length" method. Open from 10 a.m.-11 p.m. weekdays and from 9 a.m.-11 p.m. weekends. Restaurant is open for dinner from 5 p.m.-midnight, Monday through Saturday, and from 2 p.m.-midnight, Sunday. Lunch and Sunday brunch also served. Labor day is Wednesday from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; 10 runs and a complete ski shop.

7. MT. GRAMPAN—This lodge has no cocktail lounge but offers a view of its 14 slopes from an upper level cafeteria. Open from 10 a.m.-11 p.m. weekdays and from 9 a.m.-11 p.m. weekends. A group discounts available.

8. CIRCLE TNT—For \$3, snowmobilers can spend a day driving over five miles of trails. This small lodge has a snack bar, fireplace area and five runs. Open only on weekends from 10 a.m.-10 p.m. A limited ski shop.

9. BLACK FOREST—Snack bar service is provided. Otherwise, skiers must go to an adjoining motel for cocktails and dining. Open from 4 p.m.-11 p.m. weekdays and from 10 a.m.-11 p.m. weekends. Five runs. No ski shop.

## Gerhardt Needs Area Support

By CORINNE ABATT  
Louis Gerhardt, of North Congregational Church, is seeking groups willing to support the project and companies willing to donate vocational training equipment.

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especially those in the Southfield area. Jewish, Catholic and Protestant will join in support. "We're anticipating a broadening of the financial base. We aren't trying to do something on a grandiose scale; just establish a solid base."

REV. GERHARDT admits it was a risky undertaking. In the next breath, he recalls describing the program to a group in a Georgia prison and the tears poured down the cheeks of one prisoner.

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## HCMA Affirms 3 Park Sites

The Board of Commissioners of the Huron Metropolitan Authority has approved and officially designated three park projects for future development within southeastern Michigan.

Two of these were initially proposed in the Huron expansion plans revealed in July of 1972, while a third called "Oakland Metropolitan Park" was announced Dec. 6.

These sites are presently known as: (1) North Branch Metropolitan Park, covering 2,900 acres along the north branch of the Clinton River in the Huron Township between 25 and 31 Mile Roads in Maacomb County; (2) Mill Creek Metropolitan Park, covering 4,400 acres of rolling, hilly countryside located in Washtenaw County, south of the I-94 freeway, with most of the land in Lima and Freedom Townships, just west of Ann Arbor; (3) Oakland Metropolitan Park, covering 2,900 acres of land known as the "Andersonville" or "Huron Swamp" located nine miles northwest of Pontiac in Springfield and White Lake Townships in Oakland County.