



Quarterly Newsletter of B.R.E.A.D., the Columbus, Ohio Affiliate of The DART Center,
a National Network of Congregation-Based Justice Organizations
People of Faith Building Power to do Justice!

First Quarter Issue--January 2024

ANNUAL ASSEMBLY HIGHLIGHTS

Over 375 B.R.E.A.D. network members and friends attended the Annual Assembly at Christ the King Catholic Church. Rabbi Braver opened with a prayer and urged attendees to be God's partners in building the City of Righteousness in repairing our world, and in fighting for justice.

Brother James Wynn updated the attendees on progress made by the Environmental Justice Committee regarding the tree ordinance, Stop Violence! Build Trust! about the Columbus Violence Reduction initiative (CVR), and Juvenile Justice concerning the Restorative Practices campaign. City Council is expected to pass a revised public tree code by the end of 2023. The City of Columbus held two CVR call-ins with 26 participants from known violent groups. Columbus City Schools district trained 500 teachers on the restorative practices and re-committed to using the International Institute for Restorative Practices.

The 2023 congregation investment drive goal is \$239,000. To date, \$165,000 has been raised. Congratulations were extended to congregations having investments of \$15,000 or more; to four congregations having 75% of network member investing, and to eight congregations with 50% investing.

We were excited to elect a new slate of officers were introduced. Brother W.D. Smith and Rev. Joanna Samuelson will serve as co-presidents. (The full list of officers can be found on page 4).

After listening to network members give compelling testimonies on housing, education, and crime reduction for the next research action, network members voted to take on housing. The research kickoff will be on December 11 at the Church of Christ on Genessee Avenue.

Pastor Charles of Leister and Noel Williams of the Families First, Housing Now! committee called us to action to urge Columbus City Council and Franklin County Commission to allocate the remaining American Rescue funds to the Housing Trust fund and to attend the Research Kickoff.

B.R.E.A.D. RISES!

We extend an enthusiastic welcome to *University Baptist Church* and *Corinthian Missionary Baptist Church*, both of which joined B.R.E.A.D at the assembly.



IMPORTANT DATES

April 15—B.R.E.A.D. Rally
(7:00 p.m., TBA)

May 21—Nehemiah Action
(6:15 p.m. doors open; 6:40 p.m. event starts, Celeste Center)

June 24—B.R.E.A.D. Celebration!
(7:00 p.m., Location: TBA)



NETWORK SPOTLIGHT

For 14 years, Eve Herold has been a member of St. John's Episcopal Church's B.R.E.A.D. network. When asked about what motivates her to engage in justice work, Ms. Herold said that she sees social injustice around her and wants to do something about it. She initially joined her church's social justice committee. In 2008, she attended a meeting with St. John's social justice committee and B.R.E.A.D. to learn more about what B.R.E.A.D. does. She thought that B.R.E.A.D. was an unusual organization that could do something about issues like payday lenders. When St. John's decided to be a congregational member in 2009, Ms. Herold committed to being a B.R.E.A.D. network member. Since 2009, she has attended every Nehemiah action.

At the 2009 Nehemiah Action, according to Ms. Herold, network members voted on the land bank issue to deal with boarded up houses. Ms. Herold joined the research committee and found the committee experience to be rewarding. For instance, she was exposed to quite a few experts, including the Kirwan Institute, and learned quite a bit about the issue.

At the 2023 Annual Assembly, Ms. Herold was prepared to vote for education. However, after listening to Pastor Davis speak about a woman's experience with Section 8 Housing, Ms. Herold switched her vote to housing. Ms. Herold noted that all issues tend to overlap, and without stable housing, one cannot perform well in school.

When asked what advice she would like to share with network members about social justice engagement, Ms. Herold said that residents in cities like Worthington would not tolerate situations like boarded up houses. They would go to City Hall, meet with City officials, and demand action!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

B.R.E.A.D. wishes you a happy, safe holiday season. Thank you for all your support.

MAKE AN INVESTMENT in the WORK of SOCIAL JUSTICE!

If you have not done so, please consider making an investment in B.R.E.A.D. for 2023. To learn how you can make an investment, please contact the B.R.E.A.D. office at 614-220-9363 or breadcolumbus@gmail.com. You can also visit www.breadcolumbus.com/invest

THE POWER OF NETWORK MEMBERS & THE NEHEMIAH ACTION

B.R.E.A.D. network members have repeatedly seen that large *numbers* of people gathering to demand change and demonstrating for social justice can sway public officials. *On May 21, we need to turn out 2,500 people to the Nehemiah Action!* The Nehemiah is the culmination of our work to build people power and hold our public officials accountable. A large network turnout is critical to show public officials the strength of B.R.E.A.D.'s people power and commitment to justice and to get public officials' commitment to work on our key issues.

What can network members do? At least 700 network members need to bring 3 people to the Nehemiah Action. Seasoned Network members know that they need to contact at least 10 people to ensure that at least 3 people attend the Nehemiah Action. Please start talking to people about the importance of B.R.E.A.D.'s work and the need to sway public officials on our key issues. Follow up with those you contacted but have not yet made a commitment to attend Nehemiah.

Will you make this personal commitment to reach out and invite people today?

Research Committees and Updates

NEW HOUSING RESEARCH ISSUE

At the Assembly, network members voted to take on housing as B.R.E.A.D.'s new research campaign. Whatever housing topic we select will differ from our existing affordable housing efforts.

STOP VIOLENCE! BUILD TRUST!

The City of Columbus held two Columbus Violence Reduction (CVR) call-ins with 26 individuals from known violent groups participating. We will press Public Safety Department officials to formalize its oversight of CVR and guarantee its success. As part of its initial research and fact-finding about A.B.L.E., the Columbus City Police Department's training division contacted us about our impressions about the program. CPD also asked us for a letter of support if CPD opts to apply for training. We will use limited resources to engage appropriate council members concerning the non-police response and will also seek confirmation that the City has contracted with NNSC to conduct a formal reconciliation process.

JUVENILE JUSTICE

Columbus City School District re-committed to using the International Institute for Restorative Practices. In July, the State of Ohio Department of Education gave a \$1.7 million grant to the district to implement restorative practices. Since the onset of the school year, the district has trained 500 teachers over 10 sessions, and 80 teachers are now certified to train their peers. Also, B.R.E.A.D. leaders attended a two-day intensive training session. The district has invited community members to attend the next session, which will be held January 16-17, 2024. If interested, contact the B.R.E.A.D. office for more details.

CARE for CREATION—ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

We expect Columbus City Council to approve the revised public tree code by the end of 2023. The proposed revised code is much stronger than the current code and provides a promising foundation for the private tree protection ordinance. While we wait for the second phase of the private tree consultation to begin, we will meet with select peer cities that have strong protections in place for their tree canopy.

ONE ID

We continue to work with the One ID Columbus Coalition to push the Columbus City Council for an ID program.

FAMILIES FIRST and HOUSING NOW!

We continue to push for government officials to allocate American Rescue Plan funding for affordable housing. We hope to claim a victory before the Nehemiah Action and are not anticipating an action item at the Nehemiah. However, the need for an action item may change.

Questions about one of these research committees? Please visit our website at:

www.breadcolumbus.com/campaigns or email us at breadcolumbus@gmail.com.

B.R.E.A.D. MEMBER CONGREGATIONS

B.R.E.A.D. is a thriving coalition of 44 congregations located in the greater Columbus area, including two congregations that joined at the Annual Assembly. The congregations listed below are integral to our people power which gives us the strength to bring change on the issues mattering to those hungering for bread and for justice. If you know someone whose congregation is not listed below, consider introducing them to a B.R.E.A.D. organizer to learn about our issues and how their congregation can join. Call the B.R.E.A.D. office (614-220-9363) for more details.

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| Advent United Church of Christ | First Unitarian Universalist Church | St. Alban's Episcopal Church |
| Bethany Presbyterian Church | Genessee Avenue Church of Christ | St. Christopher's Catholic Church |
| Christ Lutheran Church | Gethsemane Lutheran Church | St. Dominic Catholic Church |
| Christ the King Catholic Church | Good Shepherd Baptist Church | St. Elizabeth Catholic Church |
| Christ United Methodist Church | Immaculate Conception Catholic | St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church |
| Columbus Mennonite Church | Indianola Presbyterian Church | St. John's Episcopal Church |
| The Columbus Baha'i Community | J. Jireh Ministries Church | St. Matthias Catholic Church |
| Community of Christ: Worthington | Lord of Life Lutheran Church | St. Philip Episcopal Church |
| Congregation Beth Tikvah | New Beginning Christian Center | St. Stephen's Episcopal Church |
| Congregation Tifereth Israel | New Faith Baptist Church of Christ | St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic |
| Corinthian Missionary Baptist Church | North Congregational Church (UCC) | Temple Beth Shalom |
| David's United Church of Christ | North Broadway United Methodist | Trinity Episcopal Church |
| Dominican Sisters of Peace | Redeemer Lutheran | Triumphant Christian Center |
| Faith Lutheran Church | Rhema Christian Center | University Baptist Church |
| First Congregational Church (UCC) | Saints Justice Ministry Collective | |

NEW EXECUTIVE BOARD

- Co-president: Bro. W. D. Smith, Church of Christ: Genessee Avenue
- Co-president: Rev. Joanna Samuelson, First Congregational Church UCC
- Vice-President: Rev. Steve Van Kuiken, Just North UCC
- Treasurer: Norman Wernet, St. Stephen's Episcopal
- Recording Secretary: Juana Hostin, St. Dominic Catholic Church
- Corresponding Secretary: Helen Anne Sweeney, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church

2023 CONGREGATION INVESTMENT DRIVE

The 2023 Congregation Investment Drive is \$239,000; actual raised to-date is \$165,000.

- Two congregations, Saints Justice Ministry and Tifereth Israel, invested \$15,000 or more.
- Four congregations had 75% of their networks investing in B.R.E.A.D. These congregations are Beth Tikvah, Church of Christ on Genessee Ave, Immaculate Conception, and Just North UCC.
- Eight congregations had 50% of their network members investing. These congregations include First Unitarian Universalist, Indianola Presbyterian, New Beginning, St. Christopher, Saints Justice Ministry, St. Stephen's Tifereth Israel, and St. Matthias, and Community of Christ.

B.R.E.A.D.

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B.R.E.A.D.'s MISSION

Micah 6:6-8 (NRSV)
He has told you, O mortal, what is good and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your GOD?