



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!

SECOND QUARTER ISSUE—APRIL 2024

ANNUAL NEHEMIAH ACTION, MAY 21, 2024

On May 21, 2024, at 7:00 p.m., B.R.E.A.D. will hold its annual Nehemiah Action at the Celeste Center on the Ohio State Fairgrounds. Doors will open at 6:15 p.m., and the event will start promptly at 6:40 p.m.

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. As experienced network members know, 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. Network members should contact a minimum of 10 people to ensure that at least 3 people attend the Nehemiah Action. Network members should personally contact people to discuss B.R.E.A.D.'s work and the need to sway public officials on our key issues. Network members should also follow up with those who have been contacted but have not made a commitment to attend Nehemiah.

What Can Congregational Members Do? Congregations can help turn out people for the Nehemiah Action by endorsing the importance of B.R.E.A.D.'s work, encouraging congregants to attend the Nehemiah Action, and posting announcements about the Nehemiah Action on their websites and in bulletins.



Housing Research Kickoff Meeting

IMPORTANT DATES

April 15—B.R.E.A.D. Rally (7:00 p.m.,
Congregation Tifereth Isarel, 1354 E. Broad
Street, Columbus, Ohio 43205)

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

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

NEW HOUSING COMMITTEE LAUNCHES RESEARCH PROCESS

At the Annual Assembly, network members voted to take on housing as the new research campaign. The research kickoff meeting was held on December 11 at the Church of Christ on Genesee Ave. At the kickoff meeting, network members identified many barriers to accessing and maintaining housing, such as rent increases, evictions, lack of Section 8 Housing Vouchers, and property tax upswings.

The committee has met with various experts from non-profit organizations and government officials about accessing and maintaining house. Committee members are currently conducting research and holding meetings with public officials and experts and will narrow the research topic in the following four areas: 1) high rent; 2) problems with Section 8 Voucher system; 3) homeownership barriers, and 4) high property taxes.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. RETREAT HIGHLIGHTS

This year, the B.R.E.A.D. annual Martin Luther King, Jr. retreat focused on women's contributions to the Civil Rights Movement and to social justice. The program kicked off with the screening of "The Lincoln School Story: A Battle for Integration in Ohio." The documentary chronicles a relatively unknown story about the heroic fight of women and children to desegregate the Hillsboro Ohio public schools in 1954. (Click to view: [Lincoln School Story](#)).

Gloria Phillips, Deb Suber, and Marlene Cornelius of the Christ United Methodist Church network provided moving reminiscences of their mothers' participation in the Civil Rights Movement. Their mothers' fight for social equality inspired each speaker to engage in social justice.

Helen Anne Sweeney of St. Francis of Assisi Church spoke as a VISTA volunteer. She worked for a neighborhood organization, comprised primarily of poor, Black residents. This organization formed a city-wide coalition to fight for a housing inspection code that would improve housing safety.

The passion to fight for equal rights continues to inspire our actions!



At the MLK Retreat Rhema team members discuss ways to recruit network members and network member participation.

B.R.E.A.D. in the NEWS . . .

If you missed the recent press coverage about B.R.E.A.D. campaigns, click the links below to catch up on the news!

- Affordable Housing Demonstration: On December 6, 2023, B.R.E.A.D. members demonstrated to urge City Council and the Franklin County Commission to use unspent American Rescue dollars on housing. [Two nonprofits urge city, county to use federal dollars for housing \(dispatch.com\)](#)
- New Tree Ordinance: City Council passed a city ordinance to protect trees on public property. [Public Property Tree Ordinance \(\(NBC4i.com\)](#)
- Columbus Violence Reduction (CVR): The Columbus Dispatch featured the City of Columbus's efforts to reduce gang violence, including a summary of CVR results. [First Year Efforts in Reducing Violence \(dispatch.com\)](#)
- Non-Police Alternative Crisis Response: B.R.E.A.D. members penned guest column about the importance of Columbus implementing a non-police alternative crisis response. [Michael Frierson's shooting | Columbus police unfit to handle mentally ill \(dispatch.com\)](#)

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 2024. 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 or visit our website, www.breadcolumbus.com/invest.

2023 INVESTMENT RESULTS

In 2023, individuals invested \$183,310. The dollars raised from individuals in 2023 was our best yet. We raised \$94,730 from our corporate drive.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

RESEARCH UPDATES

JUVENILE JUSTICE

In the past year, Columbus City Schools has trained over 750 staff, including administrators, counselors, social workers, and nurses to implement a Restorative Practices Program in our schools. To have even more instructors in place to help shift the culture in our schools, 100 of those newly trained staff members are expected to participate in “Train the Trainer” sessions. Since the Annual Assembly, we have been monitoring these trainings so that the program is done with fidelity. As a thank you for our persistence, the district has offered to provide a restorative practices training for community members. BREAD leaders are invited to go through a two-day training Tuesday, May 14 to Wednesday May 15. If you are interested, please contact the BREAD office. It is a program that can restore our community and combat juvenile crime and school drop-out.

ONE ID

B.R.E.A.D is a part of the **One ID Columbus Coalition**, which is comprised of local organizations advocating for the City of Columbus to implement a municipal ID program. Other cities across the nation have adopted and implemented similar programs. This program would benefit many vulnerable Columbus residents, such as the homeless and undocumented. Coalition members are meeting with the newly elected Columbus City Council members. So far, these members have expressed a willingness to work with Councilmember Barroso de Padilla to champion this initiative.

STOP VIOLENCE! BUILD TRUST!

The Columbus Violence Reduction (CVR) has reached 49 individuals who meeting the program’s goals of being safe, alive, and out of prison. 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 for our impressions of the program. CPD asked B.R.E.A.D. for a letter of support if CPD opts to apply for the training.

FAMILIES FIRST and HOUSING NOW!

“**Families First and Housing Now!**” is one of the two B.R.E.A.D. research groups working on housing-related issues. (Refer to page 1, New Housing Committee Launces Research Process). Currently, we are pushing for Columbus City County and Franklin County Commission to distribute at least \$30 million of the American Rescue Plan funds to create affordable housing options. These funds could provide housing assistance to thousands of Columbus-area families who earn \$30,000 and less. 2024 is the last year that Columbus City Council and Franklin County Commission can allocate these dollars. To date, only \$8 million of the American Rescue Plan funds have been earmarked towards housing, while \$50 million remains unallocated.

CARE for CREATION—ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Columbus City Council approved a revised public property tree code in December 2023. Successful implementation of the public property tree code will lay a foundation for implementing the private property tree code B.R.E.A.D. pushed for at the Nehemiah Action. By August 1, the City will finalize the Tree Technical Manual, distribute the manual to staff, and develop the process to implement the new provisions. We will continue to monitor progress on the private property tree code, including meeting with the Columbus Parks and Recreation Department, to ensure that the public property code development is on track. In the fall, our committee will resume our meetings and research about the private property tree ordinance.

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

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

THE IMPORTANCE OF NETWORK MEMBERS

In our pursuit of social justice for our community, network members are our most important asset. They are the source of people power that is needed to sway public officials to commit to our issue. Network members are the backbone of B.R.E.A.D.'s successes in our quest for social justice and are key to recruiting people to attend The Nehemiah Action. Throughout out the year, network members perform many other tasks. These tasks include serving on research committees, meeting with officials, attending demonstrations, and testifying at public hearings. Network members also make significant investments and work with business executives on our corporate drives so that B.R.E.A.D. has the needed funds to fight for social justice. And most importantly, they attend house meetings to discuss community issues that affect us and our communities, supporting each other in our fight for social justice. Because of our network members' commitment to social justice, B.R.E.A.D. has had many important victories for our community. In the last year, because of our persistence, the Columbus City Schools trained over 750 staff people in restorative practices. Also, the City of Columbus has implemented the Columbus Violence Reduction program, and City Council passed an ordinance to protect trees on public property.

The Nehemiah Action is our most visible display of network members' efforts to fight for social justice. To reach our goal of 2,500 people attending the Nehemiah Action on May 21, network members will need to contact over 7,000 people.

B.R.E.A.D. Rises!

NETWORK MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Gerry Rhodes is member of Rhema Christian Center's B.R.E.A.D. network. Upon retirement as a sales representative, Mr. Rhodes wanted to become involved with social justice. His sales job was not satisfying. He believed that pursuing social change would fill a gap since this work would be greater than his business experience. He decided to join his congregation's B.R.E.A.D. network. When asked why he joined B.R.E.A.D., Mr. Rhodes said that B.R.E.A.D. engages in issues, such as affordable housing, that can have a positive impact on people's lives. Members own B.R.E.A.D. not corporations.

Mr. Rhodes is a member of Families First! And Housing Now! research committee. He noted that B.R.E.A.D. has had some significant wins in assisting families earning \$30,000 or less obtain affordable housing. Based on articles that he had researched, he talked about how many Americans are a paycheck away from being homeless. Increases in rents, property taxes, utilities, and maintenance costs imperil many people's ability to access and retain a home. Mr. Rhodes is encouraged that B.R.E.A.D.'s membership voted to address housing issues relating to accessibility and retention. When asked what advice he could impart to network members, he discussed how potential network members are reluctant to join B.R.E.A.D. due to the time commitment involved. Mr. Rhodes counters this argument by explaining that a network member's commitment is not time-consuming. Membership requirements include attending four meetings a year and bringing three people to the Nehemiah Action. Also, members are invited to make an investment. Upon hearing this explanation, most people are willing to join B.R.E.A.D.

B.R.E.A.D. Congregation Members

For more information about B.R.E.A.D.'s congregation members, visit:
<https://breadcolumbus.com/congregations/>

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?

B.R.E.A.D.

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