



Quarterly Newsletter of B.R.E.A.D., the Columbus, Ohio Member Affiliate of The DART Center,
a National Network of Congregation-Based Justice Organizations

People of Faith Building Power to do Justice

FIRST QUARTER ISSUE – 2022

ANNUAL ASSEMBLY HIGHLIGHTS

Over 500 B.R.E.A.D. members and supporters joined the virtual Annual Assembly on November 15th. In his opening remarks, Rabbi Rick Kellner challenged us to act on our beliefs and reminded us that Columbus Mayor Andrew Ginther had still not met with B.R.E.A.D. representatives. The Rabbi called on all of us to contact the Mayor to urge him to meet within one month. (That meeting had still not been scheduled as of this newsletter, so stay tuned for how you'll be asked to ratchet up the intensity of our campaign to move the Mayor and the City to action). We were also reminded to call the offices of City Councilmember Favor (614-645-7263) and County Commissioner Boyce (614-525-5530) to urge them to work with BREAD on our plans for more affordable housing.

Leaders reported on the success of our investment drive, and we rejoiced in celebration of the 16 congregations where at least 50% of the Network Members invested in our work for justice, and 3 that invested over \$15,000! We heard reports on the progress accomplished through our committees on Restorative Practices, Housing, Gun Violence, and Police Reform, and we committed to redouble our efforts on those issues. The delegates also voted to choose Environmental Injustice as the newest issue that we take on (see separate article on our committees).

As is often the case at B.R.E.A.D. events, some of the best moments at the 2021 Assembly came in the form of moving testimonies from B.R.E.A.D. Network Member Tracy Armstrong and other members of our congregations, reflecting on the lack of neighborhood safety, expensive mental healthcare, and the health impacts from environmental injustice. Former State Senator and B.R.E.A.D. guest speaker Charleta Tavares added emphasis on the need for change with her own inspiring comments to the delegates.



Tracy Armstrong

To view and hear the main session of the Assembly in action, you can go to this link: <https://youtu.be/IZloWrRRuO4>

NEW EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Annual Assembly also elected these leaders to our Executive Board:

Co-President: Brother James Wynn	Co-President: Rabbi Hillel Skolnik
Vice President: Noel Williams	Treasurer: Norman Wernet
Recording Secretary: Jan Hauenstein	Corresponding Secretary: Jim Lowe

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

As of the Annual Assembly, two new faith communities joined our BREAD family. We extend an enthusiastic welcome to St. Matthias Catholic Church and Good Shepherd Baptist Church!

IMPORTANT DATES

February & March:

Check with the Justice Ministry / Rodef Tzedek Network Leader in your congregation to find out the date and time of your Network Meeting.

April 11th: Rally (7:00 PM; Site TBA)

May 10th: Nehemiah Action (6:15 pm; at Celeste Center)

June 27th: Annual Celebration (7:00 PM; Site TBA)

Fall: House Meeting
Listening Sessions
(TBA)

Have You Invested In B.R.E.A.D. ?

**Make the Commitment.
Contact the B.R.E.A.D.
Office Today!
(614-220-9363)**

Network Members & The Nehemiah Action

Again and again we've all seen that it takes a large public outcry or demonstration to sway the decisions of public officials. That's why our calls and emails, and our turnout for the Nehemiah Action, are so important. Nehemiah is the culmination of our work to build power and hold public officials accountable. At this event, officials physically see and hear the strength of BREAD's people power and the combined commitment of all those who attend. So a large member turnout is critical to pushing for change on our key issues. Seasoned organizers know that, to mobilize a large turnout, like our 3,000 person goal for Nehemiah, each Network Member has to do continuous, step-by-step recruitment. To reach 3,000 for Nehemiah, we should already have at least 750 Network members, but we only had 695 as of the Assembly. So there's not a moment to lose; please follow up with people you've spoken with who haven't decided yet, and start the conversation with those you haven't spoken to yet. Will you make that personal commitment - to reach out today?

B.R.E.A.D. IN THE NEWS !

Once again, B.R.E.A.D. has been recognized as being at the forefront of action to bring progressive change to Central Ohio. On the Metro Section front page of the January 23rd issue of the Columbus Dispatch, the B.R.E.A.D. campaign to reduce gun violence was cited as being "instrumental in advocating for the city's decision to hire criminologist David Kennedy and his team with the National Network for Safe Communities at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York in fall 2020 to assess violence in the city and devise strategies for reducing it."

Mayor Ginther announced the results of the NNSC study last October, but the Dispatch article focuses on the fact that, as B.R.E.A.D. has pointed out for months, virtually nothing has been accomplished by the city since then, and there has been nearly a complete lack of information on the status of creating and implementing a "Group Violence Intervention" initiative, or GVI. (Learn about NNSC and GVI at this link: <https://nnscommunities.org/strategies/group-violence-intervention/>) The article quotes B.R.E.A.D. Co-President James Wynn: "We're of course frustrated because we're still like, 'What is going on? How come we're not moving forward on this initiative? If this particular program is done right, you have to keep the community involved and informed as to what's going on.'"

At the October announcement, the Mayor indicated that the NNSC study found that nearly half of the homicides analyzed during the first nine months of 2020 were linked to 17 gangs or less organized groups with about 480 members (just 0.05% of the city's population). The NNSC report also spelled out concrete solutions for city leaders to implement, including the call for a GVI. Meanwhile, 2021 became the second year in a row to set a new homicide record. After 4 years of relentless B.R.E.A.D. pressure, the City finally set aside the \$80,000 for the contract with NNSC that the Mayor announced 3 months ago. During that time the City attempted to use a do-it-yourself program instead of the NNSC initiative, but that effort predictably fell short of any real impact. B.R.E.A.D., through our Committee on Reducing Gun Violence, will keep up the pressure on the City to bring the GVI to fruition. For info on how to join this or another committee, see the article on Research Committees elsewhere in this newsletter.

To see the whole Dispatch article, go to:

<https://www.dispatch.com/story/news/crime/2022/01/23/columbus-anti-violence-gvi-strategy-not-implemented-fast-enough-critics/9161475002/>



One segment of BREAD's well-attended Research Kick-Off on Zoom.

**RESEARCH COMMITTEES:
THE FOUNDATION OF B.R.E.A.D. ACTIVISM**

At our December 6th Research Kickoff, Network Members learned how B.R.E.A.D. does research, and then got the opportunity to get involved with one of the research committees. Here's a short description of each Committee, with the names and contact info for the Committee Chairs. To see the video of the Research Kick-Off, go here <https://youtu.be/bXghUw9f8mc>

GUN VIOLENCE REDUCTION

Chair:
Mary Counter
marycounter@gmail.com

We continue to press for real action and accountability by the City, through the Columbus Gun Violence Initiative. (see separate article for more details). The Committee is merging with the Police Reform Committee, and they will meet jointly on Zoom at 6:00 PM on Tue. 02/15. To attend a meeting or join the committee, call the B.R.E.A.D. office at 614-220-9363 or email to breadcolumbus@gmail.com.

FAMILIES FIRST - HOUSING NOW

Co-Chairs:
Noel Williams
noelthe1st@hotmail.com
Rev. Charles Leister
caleister@newbeginningsministries.org

Our Housing Committee is still pressing the City and County for 2 commitments: 1) more funding; and 2) a real plan. We need to see more housing built for families making \$30,000 or less per year. Please watch for news of upcoming events that we'll organize, to get the Mayor's attention. We'll need our Network Members to mobilize, show up, and speak out!

POLICE REFORM

Co-Chairs:
Cathy Levine
cathyjlevine@gmail.com
James Wynn
jaw2dub@yahoo.com

The Police Reform Committee is using our people power to change the nature of policing in Columbus. Among other goals, we support a formal reconciliation process to build trust between the police and most affected communities. (see separate article for more details) The Committee is merging with the Gun Violence Committee, and they will meet jointly on Zoom on 02/15 at 6:00 PM. To attend a meeting or join the committee, send an email to robtsw@gmail.com

JUVENILE JUSTICE

Leadership:
For info, and/or to join the committee, please contact the **B.R.E.A.D. Office**
614-220-9363
breadcolumbus@gmail.com
B.R.E.A.D. won support from the Columbus Schools to have 100 staff trained on restorative practices, a successful alternative to out-of-school suspensions. So schools are seeing reductions in disciplinary incidents, and we are continuing our work with Administrators to assure system-wide use of restorative practices. No meetings are set at this time, but the Committee welcomes new members.

WELCOME COLUMBUS - ONE ID

Chair:
Ed Hoffman
edhoffman50@yahoo.com

B.R.E.A.D. is still working to get the city of Columbus to establish a municipal ID program that will help thousands of residents to have access to an ID. We are securing funds for the program, starting with the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio, and we're planning a "See the Need ID Tour" for local officials on 03/01/22. This will allow them to safely interact with local residents in need of an ID, and organizations that serve them.

CARE FOR CREATION - ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Leadership:
For info, and/or to join the committee, please contact the **B.R.E.A.D. Office**
614-220-9363
breadcolumbus@gmail.com
The newest B.R.E.A.D committee was established at our Annual Assembly, to address a wide range of area environmental issues, including unsafe air quality, and extreme urban heat. The initial work is focusing on concerns over flooding and the critical need to prevent mold exposures and mitigate the impact of mold in homes and workplaces.

HIRE & BETTER PAY - JOBS CAMPAIGN; ELDER CARE

These 2 committees do not have any meetings or actions scheduled at this time. If you want more info on their activities, or want to join, please contact the B.R.E.A.D. office at 614-220-9363, or breadcolumbus@gmail.com

GVI – PROGRESS DRIVEN BY B.R.E.A.D.

We, on the BREAD Gun Violence Reduction Committee, welcome the second year of funding to keep the National Network for Safe Communities (NNSC) as a consultant in Columbus to reduce violent assaults and murders in our city.



BREAD action prodded the City to have NNSC study violence causes and develop the GVI.

The Columbus Gun Violence Initiative (GVI) Team has been in place since June, 2021. Since BREAD began to seek a GVI strategy in 2015, we promised to be an active community partner. As such, we continue to seek accountability and action to keep our community safe. We are pressing for a coordination and management structure, metrics that measure progress and public engagement, using

Social Media options. Our committee was represented at GVI University in June, 2021, and has subsequently continued to meet with the GVI Team, Public Safety, and Police Chief Bryant to implement this critical strategy now. You are welcome to join us at any of our monthly meetings. Our next meeting will be on Zoom, February 15 at 6:00 PM. Call Mary Counter at 614-459-8133 for more info. If you want to join the committee or attend a meeting, please contact Rob Sievert-Wagner at robtsw@gmail.com.

THE DART CONNECTION – WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER

B.R.E.A.D. members know that the difficult issues we take on, and the juice we pursue, challenge us physically and emotionally. We often win battles in the short term, only to face a protracted war to win true long term justice. But we should be heartened, not just by our victories, but also by the fact that we are part of a larger movement fighting for justice through 28 sister organizations. As an affiliate of the Direct Action And Research Training Center (DART), we are part of a network of multi-congregational justice ministries fighting for change on many of the same issues. DART links our organizations and helps build our movement with training for professional organizers and faith leaders. In future issues of the newsletter, we'll offer a glimpse of some of our sister organizations' struggles and success. In the meantime, you can learn more at: <https://thedartcenter.org/>.



POLICE REFORM – DEMANDING ACTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Created as an ad hoc research committee in the wake of George Floyd's murder, the B.R.E.A.D. Police Reform Committee's work gained urgency from the police killings of Casey Goodson Jr., Andre Hill, and Ma'Khia Bryant. We found, in the Columbus Police Department, a culture that includes excessive use of force, toxic disregard for transparency and accountability for wrongdoing, a culture of racism, and a lack of mutual trust and respect between police and Columbus communities. We have asked the new Columbus Police Chief, Elaine Bryant, and newly appointed Director of Public Safety, Robert Clark, to support a formal reconciliation process to build trust between the police and most affected communities. They expressed general support, but no have made no commitments yet. We have also researched successful models for a non-police response to mental health crises and other 911 calls not involving weapons, and sought the City's support. But the city is developing its own model, behind closed doors, without hiring expert consultants or receiving regular input from BREAD and other community voices. Will the city expand and improve its model? Only a large turnout for our Nehemiah Action on May 10th might turn things around.

Interested in exploring opportunities to become an organizer in one of our DART sister organizations? Learn more here:

www.thedartcenter.org/careers

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

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

B.R.E.A.D. is a thriving coalition of 44 congregations from throughout the Columbus area, including the two that just joined at our Annual Assembly. Every one of the congregations listed below is an integral part of the people power that has given us the strength to bring change on the issues that matter to those who hunger for bread, and those who hunger for justice. But we need to make a joyful noise and spread the good news about our work to more people. If you know a member of a congregation that's **not** on the list 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 on this important opportunity to grow our coalition.

Advent United Church of Christ	First Unitarian Universalist Church	St. Alban's Episcopal Church
Bethany Presbyterian Church	Genesee Avenue Church of Christ	St. Christopher 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 Church
Columbus Mennonite Church	Indianola Presbyterian Church	St. John's Episcopal Church
Columbus Baha'i Community	J. Jireh Ministries Church	St. Matthias Catholic Church
Community of Christ: Worthington	Karl Road Christian Church	St. Philip's Episcopal Church
Congregation Agudas Achim	Lord of Life Lutheran Church	St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Congregation Beth Tikvah	New Beginning Christian Center	St. Thomas More Newman Center
Congregation Tifereth Israel	New Faith Baptist Church of Christ	St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic
David's United Church of Christ	North Broadway United Methodist	Temple Beth Shalom
Dominican Sisters of Peace	North Congregational Church (UCC)	Trinity Episcopal Church
Faith Lutheran Church	Redeemer Lutheran	Triumphant Christian Center
First Congregational Church (UCC)	Rhema Christian Center	

The B.R.E.A.D. 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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