



BUILDING RESPONSIBILITY,
EQUALITY AND DIGNITY

OHIO

LEADERS FOR EQUALITY
AND ACTION IN DAYTON



BREAD pressed our local mental health board to allocate more than \$200,000 to a new program called the Clubhouse that will save hundreds of lives this year! For two years, our local mental health board claimed Pharaoh's myth of scarcity and fear justifying the hoarding of \$50 million in reserves in case the tax levy failed. BREAD fought back, and in October of this year a new facility was opened providing services for more than 100 people and saving lives. BREAD...Rises

While jobs, educational opportunities and health care services are abundant in the suburbs that surround Dayton, many of these services are lacking in low-income areas of the city itself. Beginning in 2010, LEAD pressed the predominantly white suburb of Beavercreek to allow a bus line from the city center, making jobs and education easier to access for minority and low-income residents. Despite Pharaoh's narrative of fear, LEAD fought and won new bus routes into job-rich areas in and around Dayton.

SOUTH CAROLINA



CHARLESTON AREA
JUSTICE MINISTRY

In Charleston County School District, while black students make up only 42% of the school population, they account for more than 85% of school suspensions and 85% of school-based arrests. In just one and a half years, about 1,200 students were arrested for incidents including disturbing school and disorderly conduct. In April, at CAJM's fourth Nehemiah Action, with more than 2,000 people present, CAJM gained commitments from school board members to lower suspensions and arrests by teaching behavior instead of punishing behavior through the use of Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports and Restorative Practices. Through CAJM's power of people we secured a 7-1 vote from the school board to implement both programs district wide.

TENNESSEE

JUSTICE KNOX



On November 14, 2016, fourteen diverse congregations throughout Knoxville, TN – and over 230 congregation members – signed a covenant to build and grow a local justice ministry called Justice Knox. At this Covenant Assembly, we voted to tackle problems related to mental health and the education system. Since the assembly, we have added three member congregations. Justice Knox congregations are committed to building power for justice by realizing the Justice Ministry Vision of 52/1: Since we turn out our average worship attendance 52 weeks of the year for faithfulness ministry (worship), once a year we should turn out that same number of people for justice to the big Nehemiah Action Assembly. We will powerfully address problems in mental health and education at our inaugural Nehemiah Action on April 24, 2017.

VIRGINIA



INTERFAITH MOVEMENT
PROMOTING ACTION BY
CONGREGATIONS TOGETHER

Each year our local jail locks up 3,150 people that are addicted to drugs or alcohol. Women struggle the most because there are no local options for long term treatment. So with the power of 1,000 people at each of our last two Nehemiah Actions, IMPACT got three city councilors, three county supervisors and a major service provider to agree that this treatment was needed. Now the Women's Treatment Center will deliver care, not jail, to 50 women and their children starting in October 2017! Currently, IMPACT has 26 member congregations that join together to work on the root causes of serious community problems.

RICHMONDERS INVOLVED
TO STRENGTHEN OUR
COMMUNITIES



Five years ago, RISC leaders found that only 10% of residents in our community's distressed neighborhoods have full-time employment. Meanwhile, our hospitals had more than 500 unfilled jobs every year, most of them requiring minimal training. After 3 years of urging our region's hospitals to hire and train residents of these neighborhoods, in 2016 two hospitals made the commitment! Through a partnership with local workforce agencies, these hospitals will recruit residents of distressed neighborhoods to fill in-demand jobs, giving these residents steady employment and training as they progress from entry-level jobs to healthcare careers.

THIS JUST IN...

FEBRUARY 2016



ISSUE VICTORIES

SOLVING COMMUNITY PROBLEMS
ACROSS THE DART NETWORK

FLORIDA



BROWARD ORGANIZED
LEADERS DOING JUSTICE

In Broward County 1,500 people in jail have a mental illness! BOLD Justice won a commitment from the Broward County sheriff to train all 2,800 of his officers on skills to divert people with mental illness out of the criminal justice system and into treatment. BOLD has also worked to reduce the number of first-time youth offenders processed through the criminal justice system. In 2015 BOLD Justice worked with nine other DART organizations across the state of Florida to pass SB378, which enables law enforcement to divert first-time youth offenders into community service programs without receiving an arrest record.

LEE INTERFAITH FOR
EMPOWERMENT



According to the Florida Department of Corrections, more than 3% of Lee County's residents were incarcerated in 2014 alone. The inability to secure employment post incarceration is exacerbated by hiring processes that use questions regarding criminal conviction. On March 23, 2015, 1,211 Lee County residents assembled to demand Fort Myers city officials adopt a fair chance hiring policy. In August, LIFE leaders received official word that we are the seventh Florida city to "Ban the Box" from city job applications! Lee Interfaith For Empowerment is a diverse coalition of 14 congregations representing over 10,000 citizens of Lee County.



INTERFAITH COALITION FOR
ACTION, RECONCILIATION
AND EMPOWERMENT

Every year, the 30,000 people released from jail back into Duval County need help getting on their feet. The Jacksonville Re-Entry Center, a national model in serving ex-offenders, provides wrap-around services to ex-offenders, including: clothing, IDs, food, mental health counseling, and other necessary services. At our 2016 Nehemiah Action Assembly, ICARE asked the sheriff to allocate more funds to the program's budget. Because of the power of our 1,500 people, he agreed, committing \$900,000 to fund the Jacksonville Re-Entry Center. Last year, it served more than 600 people. This is not enough to serve the over 1,600 people eligible for the program. In 2017 the center will have five new staff persons that will allow it to serve more people.

PEOPLE ACTING FOR
COMMUNITY TOGETHER



Because of PACT's push in 2012, the Superintendent created for all schools a memorandum for all "level 1" and "level 2" violations of the Code of Conduct as a reason for out-of-school suspensions. Because of these changes, between 2012 and 2013, there was a 32% decrease in suspensions – which is 12,000 fewer suspension cases! As of July 2015, the Superintendent announced that all out of school suspensions would be eliminated. PACT is a diverse coalition of 37 congregations and two universities throughout Miami-Dade County. It is the largest grassroots organization in South Florida, representing more than 50,000 people. Since 1988, PACT has come together in Miami Dade County to make significant changes in the county.



PEOPLE ENGAGED IN ACTIVE COMMUNITY EFFORTS

Because of PEACE's success in getting Palm Beach County to establish a Wage Theft program three years ago, nearly 500 victims of wage theft have received more than \$600,000 back in wages they were initially denied. We continue to ensure that people receive their due wages for their hard work. The PEACE Wage Theft campaign has generated mass media attention, including national media outlets. PEACE continues to grow, adding four additional congregations to its membership and reaching its highest ever Nehemiah Action attendance – 2,607 in 2015.



POLK ECUMENICAL ACTION COUNCIL FOR EMPOWERMENT

Since 2005, PEACE in Polk County, FL has worked for access to health care, even when the county said that it wouldn't fund health care for the uninsured and underinsured. PEACE pushed for an indigent sales tax to get on the ballot, even when the county said that it would never pass. PEACE spread the word in congregations and it passed with 62% of the vote. When PEACE asked for five primary care clinics to serve the poor, the county tried to prioritize other projects. But after a 12-year fight, on April 17, 2017, the 5th and final clinic that PEACE pushed for will be opened! Combined, these five clinics will serve over 25,000 individuals annually who normally couldn't afford health care.



HILLSBOROUGH ORGANIZATION FOR PROGRESS AND EQUALITY

In Hillsborough County, 700 children a year were being arrested for misdemeanor possession of marijuana. But HOPE leaders pushed law enforcement to issue civil citations for these minor offenses. Because of our power and persistence, in July of 2016, HOPE got the county sheriff to sign an agreement with the Tampa chief of police, the public defender, the state attorney, and the chief judge that established a pilot program, offering children restorative programs when caught with a small amount of marijuana. So far, about 100 children have avoided lifelong arrest records for a childhood indiscretion. HOPE is currently comprised of 20 congregations representing a diverse mix of race, culture, economic levels and religious traditions throughout Hillsborough County.

FAITH AND ACTION FOR STRENGTH TOGETHER



For the past three years, FAST has pushed our school board to get rid of out-of-school suspensions. Our district was issuing more than 16,000 suspensions every year despite recognizing that this method increases a student's likelihood of dropping out and often results in children being unsupervised out in the streets. Because of our work, out-of-school suspensions have dropped by 41% since 2014, when we succeeded in getting an agreement signed between the School District and the police municipalities across Pinellas County to focus on reducing youth arrests in schools.

SARASOTA UNITED FOR RESPONSIBILITY AND EQUITY



The city of Sarasota made 884 arrests of homeless individuals for minor ordinance violations, many of whom struggled with mental illness. SURE found programs in other cities that would offer those suffering with mental illness a chance at services and housing, rather than jail. Despite some officials' narrative of scarcity that there was no chance of money for such a program, in 2016, we secured \$2.4 million over three years to bring the program about. Our Comprehensive Treatment Court will help 120 homeless individuals per year get into housing, services and a life of dignity they deserve. For over a decade, SURE has been a definitive ministry in Sarasota, crossing lines of faith, denomination, age, race, geography, and income.

FIGHTING AGAINST INJUSTICE TOWARD HARMONY



It is estimated that on any given night, more than 5,000 people in Volusia County are homeless. With only 21 emergency shelter beds in the entire county, the homeless in our communities are often forced to sleep on the street or end up in jail for "trespassing." For the past 5 years, FAITH has been pushing local governments to fund a homeless assistance center that will provide emergency shelter for the homeless, as well as centralize social services that will allow them to get back on their feet and into permanent housing. At our 2016 Nehemiah Action Assembly, FAITH won commitments totaling over \$8 million from public officials representing city and county governments towards creating the homeless assistance center.

INDIANA



CONGREGATIONS ACTING FOR JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

Since 2014, CAJE has pushed for all first responders to carry the overdose antidote Narcan. Now hundreds of law enforcement officers in the greater-Evansville area are equipped and at least 12 lives have been saved directly because of CAJE's efforts! In the past year, CAJE has trained over 120 leaders, nearly 500 leaders participated in our annual listening process and over 200 leaders have participated in building strong justice ministry networks in their congregations.



JUSTICE · MATTERS

Justice Matters won a commitment by the Lawrence Police Chief to train 100% of its officers by 2018 on how to effectively handle encounters with those in mental health crisis. This training, known as Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), will also give officers the understanding necessary to know when to divert the right people away from jail toward treatment alternatives. To date, approximately 75% of all officers have been through the 40-hour training.

UNITING COMMUNITIES OF FAITH TO DO JUSTICE



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MICAH 6:8 — He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

KANSAS

JUSTICE MATTERS

TOPEKA JUSTICE AND UNITY MINISTRY PROJECT



In 2015, Topeka JUMP discovered that more than two out of every five renters in Topeka, Kansas pays more than 50% of their income on rent. We brought 540 people together at our Nehemiah Action Assembly where we pressed Mayor Larry Wolgast to commit to develop a plan to increase access to affordable housing – and he agreed! Since then, a task force has been meeting monthly to follow through on that commitment.

KENTUCKY



BUILDING A UNITED INTERFAITH LEXINGTON THROUGH DIRECT-ACTION

One in four families in Lexington cannot afford rent because there is a lack of affordable housing. In 2014, BUILD won a commitment from Mayor Gray to establish an Affordable Housing Fund with a dedicated funding source of \$2 million per year. So far, more than 500 units of affordable housing have been funded! Presently, 27 congregations with more than 15,000 individuals are members of BUILD. We come from all parts of Fayette County, representing a diverse mix of persons by race, economic class, and religious traditions.

CITIZENS OF LOUISVILLE ORGANIZED AND UNITED TOGETHER



In 2016, CLOUT got its local public school system to commit \$5.3 million to begin the move from "zero tolerance" policies to the use of "restorative practices," in order to plug the "school-to-prison pipeline." Since the 2014-2015 school year, in response to years of work by CLOUT, 76 schools have been trained in the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program, which gives schools the tools to resolve discipline issues in the classroom, reducing suspension rates, referrals to alternative schools, and drop-outs.