



# BREAD

*People of Faith Building Power To Do Justice*

B.R.E.A.D. Newsletter

Jep Hostetler, Editor – 299-1961

November 2009

## BREAD To Focus On Youth

On Monday Nov. 16, an enthusiastic crowd of faithful congregations gathered at the Rhema Christian Center, for the Annual Assembly. We met to select the



problem for next year’s research and action. The assembly was warmly greeted by Pastor Dan Harris and the lovely music of Rhema Christian Center’s women’s trio. Rev. Deb Stevens, North Broadway UMC, provided the opening reflection.



Bishop William Polley, pastor of Zion Christian Assembly, presented the winning case for selecting “youth” as our new problem area. Here is Bishop Polley’s address: *“When people met in house meetings across our City this Fall, one of the problems that people talked*

*about was what was happening with our youth, especially middle school and high school young people. Every year, we seem to be losing more and more kids to the streets, to gangs, to violence and crime. As an organization, BREAD has crafted a highly effective campaign to address truancy. Many of us know that truancy is a first step. But, there is more work to be done....”*

Bishop Polley told one story about a grandmother trying to raise her grandson.

*“My grandson is 14 years old. He is basically a good kid but he has a behavioral and learning disability. With this diagnosis, he goes to a special school. He is hard to handle. To help out, I agreed to let him live with me to give his mother a break. Things were going along okay*

*until recently when he was playing on school grounds with some friends in our neighborhood. This was after school hours. This was not his school. One of his friends had brought a BB gun. A neighbor saw what they thought was a gun and called the police. The police showed up and arrested all of the kids. Although he was not charged with anything, school officials decided to suspend my grandson along with all of the other kids until January. The school district provides two hours a week of tutoring, but he is falling further and further behind in school. I agree that he should not have had a BB gun at school, but the decision to suspend him for two months is the wrong way to solve that problem. He is falling further and further behind in school. That fact is only going to make him more difficult to manage when he gets back to school. As a grandmother, I don't really know where to turn or what to do in order to help him out.”*

Unfortunately, this story is being repeated over and over again for hundreds of kids throughout our City. That is why BREAD chose this problem for research and action.



Congregations met to caucus, and determine how they would vote. Youth was chosen as the next problem for research and action when a majority of congregations cast their vote for that problem.

## Cleveland Land Bank Generates Millions to Address Vacant Housing



Jim Rokakis, Cuyahoga County Treasurer, described how the Cuyahoga Land Bank generates over \$10 million annually to address vacant housing. This "Land Bank" uses income generated from tax liens to strategically acquire abandoned homes and vacant land and turn them into community assets.

Currently, Columbus uses a passive land bank model. The Columbus Land Bank relies on an annual appropriation from the city to manage properties that have been abandoned. Unfortunately, this model forgoes millions of dollars that Cuyahoga County is generating and using to combat neighborhood blight. BREAD is currently focused on getting state legislation passed to allow Franklin County to utilize the Cuyahoga model. With permissive legislation, the organization will focus on getting Franklin County to adopt this model.

## Access to Healthcare

Mary Galloway gave an update on the critical need for health care, and how the Healthcare Committee is planning to address this next. BREAD will be working to launch a campaign for dedicated revenue to support primary care.



Dozens of testimonies were heard in house meetings about the many challenges that our members are having in getting good healthcare. People struggle with the high cost of prescriptions, denial of coverage because of pre-existing conditions, and losing health insurance when they lose jobs. Cheryl Bresler of Congregation Tifereth Israel told how her son's diabetes made it practically impossible to get health coverage. Her son had been covered as a college student at Ohio University. But once he turned 23, his coverage expired even though he has been in college since high school. Stories like this one are being told over and over again in our congregations.

## Drug Court

Peg Kissell brought some good news from this committee, reporting that there are now 37 persons participating in the program. Furthermore, Judge Patrick Sheeran predicts that there will be 50 in the program by year's end.



## Officers Elected

The assembly approved the nominating committee's suggested slate. Our new officers for the coming year are: Co-President, Rev. Robert Arbogast, of Olentangy Christian Reformed Church, Co-President Rev. Jefferey P. Kee, of New Faith Baptist Church of Christ, Vice-President Rev. Glenn Schwerdtfeger, Christ United Methodist Church, Treasurer Mary Galloway, Christ the King Catholic Church, Recording Secretary Leroy Hushak, St. Thomas Moore/Newman Center, and Corresponding Secretary Jep Hostetler, Columbus Mennonite Church.

## Research Kick-Off

**IMPORTANT DATE: Monday Dec. 7**-The Research Kick-off will be held at Noor Islamic Cultural Center, 5001 Wilcox Rd, Dublin 43016 from 7-9 p.m. To get to Noor, take I-270 to Tuttle Crossing in Northwest Columbus. This is the exit for the Tuttle Mall. Go west (away from the Mall) and take Tuttle Crossing until it ends at Wilcox Road. Turn left onto Wilcox. Noor will be on the right, less than a half a mile from Tuttle.



All photos in this issue were taken by Jon Groner or Jep Hostetler.