

## **BUILD December Update:**

Seton BUILD leaders completed the last of six "house meetings" this fall, where over 40 parishioners expressed their concerns living in Lexington today and became justice ministry network members. On November 6 they participated in the Community Problems Assembly (CPA) where over five hundred Lexingtonians shared their interest in justice ministry. They considered the wide variety of concerns expressed at house meetings throughout the county and decided to focus upon drug issues for the upcoming year. The overall attendance goal for the May 8, 2018 Nehemiah Action was set at 2000, including a goal of 180 from SEAS. The next meeting for all network members is the Research to Action kick-off, at 6:30 pm, December 11, at Second Presbyterian Church on East Main St.

Although three months away, have 9:30 am. March 10 on the calendar for a SEAS BUILD member meeting in the school library.

Following is a more complete BUILD report from the Community Problems Assembly:

Our **Mission** is to Do Justice as God requires of us. Our **Vision** is **52:1**. If we can gather for worship 52 times a year, certainly each BUILD congregation can bring their average worship attendance to our Nehemiah Action Assembly once a year to hold our public officials accountable to do what is right, what is fair and what is just!

**Great News** to celebrate! 520 people were present Mon. Nov. 6 at Shiloh Baptist Church; 140 more folks than at last year's CPA! In total, 468 were Justice Ministry Network Members. With 68% of votes cast for *DRUGS*, the research process on this 'new' community problem will begin Dec. 11th. Education/youth received 152 votes and Healthcare 16 votes. The powerful testimonies shared from just these three problems were profound reminders that we've plenty of injustice issues to address within our beloved community!

**Current Campaigns:** *MENTAL HEALTH:* BUILD will follow-up with commitment from Vice Mayor Steve Kay and Charlie Lanter to find a permanent funding source for Mental Health Court and with the ACT (Assertive Community Treatment) Team at Bluegrass.org to assure that more people have access for care. BUILD also received the 2017 NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Lexington Wings Award for our work to expand access to mental healthcare.

*CRIME:* Alert: 28 homicides and 80+ shootings resulting in serious injuries and/or property damage since Jan. 2017! With a multitude of stories shared during our 80 house meetings depicting the impact of these crimes on folks living in ALL areas of our city and as we begin our third year mission to *STOP the VIOLENCE*, our Mayor and city leaders continue to circumvent our primary ask: to contract with the National Network for Safe Communities (NNSC). We were successful in getting our mayor, public safety commissioner and police commander to the NNSC conference in NYC this past June. Thanks to everyone that inundated the mayor's office with your calls and emails upon his absence at our Nehemiah Action! BUILD's crime committee met with Mayor Gray's staff on Sept. 5th to follow up. Another meeting was on Nov. 10th after their visit to Chattanooga to see their strategies for reducing violent crime. Once again, we were presented their plans to reduce violent crime in Lex: an exhaustive list of various community/mentoring programs they are exploring with hopes to implement "in the near future."

These various programs are needed in Lex. and crucial with abating one's propensity to commit crimes. My frustration with the mayor and his staff's 'delay and deflect tactics' to invite the NNSC to visit Lex. to assess the worsening violent crime problem is making me angry! We MUST continue to build our power as we engage other allies and public official to address this serious situation.

*PAYDAY LENDING:* BUILD's voice along with many state wide partners created enough uproar that the federal Consumer Finance Protection Bureau (CFPB) had to act! On Oct. 5th, they announced a new rule to counter payday lending "debt traps." This rule requires payday lenders make sure folks can repay the loan. It also limits the number of loans that can be taken out at a time and how many days one can be in debt from the loans each year. This new rule has real potential but we know the payday lenders will try to challenge this rule. We are watching!

**2017-2018 BUILD officers:**

Rev. Joe Owens (Shiloh Baptist Church) - Co-Chair  
Kabby Akers (Mary Queen of the Holy Rosary) - Co-Chair  
Sherry Warsh (Consolidated Baptist Church) - Vice Chair  
Belinda Snead (Consolidated Baptist Church) - Treasurer  
Judy Maxson (Second Presbyterian Church) - Corresponding Secretary  
Gail Swanson (Faith Lutheran Church) - Recording Secretary  
Dwayne Edwards (Historic St. Paul Catholic Church) - Member at Large  
Fr. Andrew Hege (Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd) - Member at Large  
Dcn. Bob Joice (St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church) - Member at Large

**Next Steps:**

Doing Justice is sacred work that commands our dedication, commitment and leadership. The Nehemiah Action attendance goal as congregations reported during Roll Call was 2,780! That means each of our current 468 committed network members who were at the CPA will each need to bring at least 6 people to the Action! We did not reach our 2000 goal last year even with 700 network members so we have a lot of work to do. Since BUILD's goal these past few years is 750 members bringing 3 people with them to reach 2000, I challenge each one of us to diligently focus on growing our networks by inviting others to join us. We have much work to do to reach either number! But we can do this! Our love and compassion to make our beloved Lex. more like a city of God is one of our many strengths.

**Research Kick-off, Mon. Dec. 11th, 6 PM registration, 6:30 PM start, Second Presbyterian Church** doing this 'new' justice work. Do come to the Research Kick-off to learn what happens during the research process and how we decide what to specifically focus on through our campaigns. As a committed Justice Ministry Network Member at your congregation, you are welcome to work on a research team on whatever specific day(s) and time(s) that work for you to serve.

**Investment Drive**

As of today, we have exceeded our organizational Congregational Investment Drive goal by \$7,984! If every congregations reaches their individual 2017 goals, we will have raised over \$95,000!

**Upcoming Important Dates for Justice Ministry Network Members**

- Dec. 11th 6:30 PM Research Kick-off 2nd Presbyterian Church E. Main/Ransom St.
- April 16th 7:00 PM Rally Consolidated Baptist Church [1625 Russell Cave RD](#)
- May 8th 6:30PM Nehemiah Action Assembly Heritage Hall
- June 11th 7 PM Justice Ministry Celebration Mary Queen of the Holy Rosary [601 Hill N Dale DR](#)
- AND March 10<sup>th</sup> 9:30 am St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Network Member Meeting in school library