

## Members

Allied Justice Seekers

Bon Air Presbyterian  
Church

Congregation Or Ami

East End Fellowship

Ebenezer Baptist  
Church

Faith Community  
Baptist Church

First Congregational  
Christian Church of  
Christ

First Presbyterian  
Church

First Unitarian  
Universalist Church

Fourth Baptist Church

Ginter Park  
Presbyterian Church

Greater Joy  
Community Church

Hill City Church

Sacred Heart  
Catholic Church

Second Baptist Church  
(Southside)

Southminster  
Presbyterian Church

St. Elizabeth Catholic  
Church

St. John's Episcopal  
Church

St. John's United Church  
of Christ

St. Paul's Episcopal  
Church

Temple Beth El

Union Presbyterian  
Seminary



## What is RISC?

RISC – Richmonders Involved to Strengthen Our Communities - is an organization made up of congregations from throughout Richmond, Henrico and Chesterfield. Founded in 2002, we use the power of large numbers of organized people to solve critical community problems. We are not a direct service provider, rather we are a grassroots, direct action, multi-issue organization.

## How does RISC work?

RISC follows a yearly process that focuses on building and strengthening a Justice Ministry (Rodef Tzedek) Network at each member congregation. In the Fall, Team Leaders host House Meetings to discuss community problems and engage participants as Network Members. From November through March, Issue Committees are formed to conduct research into the problems, and ultimately come up with specific, winnable solutions. The Nehemiah Action is held in April, where thousands gather to ask public officials to implement these solutions. After the Nehemiah Action, leaders follow up on the commitments made at the Action, and Network Members are invited to invest in RISC.

### *Justice Ministry (Rodef Tzedek) Network Members Commit to the Following:*

- 1) Attend the 4 RISC Assemblies of the year –**  
The Community Problems Assembly (November 9, 2021)  
The Rally (March 14, 2022)  
The Nehemiah Action (April 5, 2022)  
The Justice Ministry Celebration (June 13, 2022)
- 2) Bring at least 3 people to the NEHEMIAH ACTION**
- 3) Consider an investment of \$200 or more in justice ministry**

## Our Vision for Justice Ministry

Micah 6:8 provides a clear list of requirements for God's people: to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

We believe that doing justice is a core part of our faith traditions, and yet one that is often overlooked. Our vision is to build up the Justice Ministries (Rodef Tzedek) within each congregation such that justice is an integral part of their culture.

In 2019, we brought out over 700 people to the Nehemiah Action. In 2020, our Nehemiah Action had to be canceled due to COVID-19; in 2021, we turned out a record-breaking 2,004 people. Through building the power of organized people, we believe we will transform the Richmond area, such that justice can and will be realized for all.

## What is RISC currently working on?

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

We have a CRISIS in our city, when it comes to the lack of truly affordable housing. Our research shows there is a shortage of 25,000 units of affordable housing – the vast majority of which is concentrated among households making under 30% AMI (approximately \$27,000 for a family of four).

RISC succeeded in getting the city's Affordable Housing Trust Fund funded back in 2015. Over \$9 million has been invested since then, and 1,200 units of affordable housing have been the result. The problem is that 1,200 is nowhere near enough, and less than 10 of those units have been for households making under 30% AMI. The result? An evictions crisis – catapulting Richmond to #2 on a national ranking of cities' eviction rates.

This past year, we succeeded in getting the Mayor and City Council to pass an Ordinance creating a dedicated stream of revenue for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which will grow to an annual allocation of \$10 million yearly by the summer of 2025. And, at our Nehemiah Action, with 2,004 RISC members present, we secured commitments from 2 City Council members to champion ensuring an allocation of \$10 million this budget year, as well as to make it that half of these funds are set aside for the creation of units for those making under 30% AMI. We are now in the process of conducting meetings to ensure they follow through.

### GUN VIOLENCE

In 2020, there were 65 murders by gun in the city of Richmond. This is double the number of murders by gun in 2013 (32) – the problem is getting worse and lives are being lost.

Since June of 2020, we have been calling upon Mayor Stoney to bring a proven gun violence intervention program called Group Violence Intervention (GVI) to our city. GVI has been implemented in dozens of cities nationwide; in its best cases, GVI has proven to cut homicides in half.

We have asked Mayor Stoney to move forward with GVI, or another proven, evidence-based program many times since June of 2020. In September of that year he reported to us that he and his team are developing a hybrid gun violence intervention framework. We are committed to continuing to ask the city to implement a proven evidence-based program, to address this crisis.

We are organizing a Gun Violence Roundtable to take place in September of this year, at which we will convene national experts, local stakeholders, and allies.

### CARE FOR CREATION

We are undertaking an issue campaign around addressing the local impact of climate change / environmental injustice. This Fall's house meetings will include a question getting at our people's experiences with flooding, food insecurity, heat, pollution, etc ... and at our Community Problems Assembly in November we will vote to undertake work in one of these areas.

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## What has RISC accomplished in recent years?

- ✓ Almost 3,000 families have been able to stay in their homes, as the result of a **\$6 million allocation to emergency rental assistance** we were able to get Mayor Stoney to make in the summer of 2020 (from the city's CARES Act funding).
- ✓ Over 400 families benefited through the **Eviction Diversion Program** we won in 2019, by receiving financial assistance, counseling, and keeping an eviction off their record.
- ✓ 106 low-income, job seekers completed the **VCU Pathways Program** we won, that started in June of 2018. This is a pipeline to in demand healthcare careers with work readiness and mentorship components.