

LEAD brings together large numbers of people across racial, denominational and economic lines to make a difference in our neighborhoods and local decision making.

Join us as we proclaim:

***"Let justice take the LEAD!"***

*What does the Lord require of you?  
To do **justice**, love mercy and walk  
humbly with your God.  
Micah 6:8*

LEAD does not do direct service to address symptoms of community problems – instead, we do research into the causes of community problems and then take action to address problems at their source.

For instance, many nonprofits provide food or shelter to families in need, without seriously questioning why there are so many hungry and homeless people in our community.

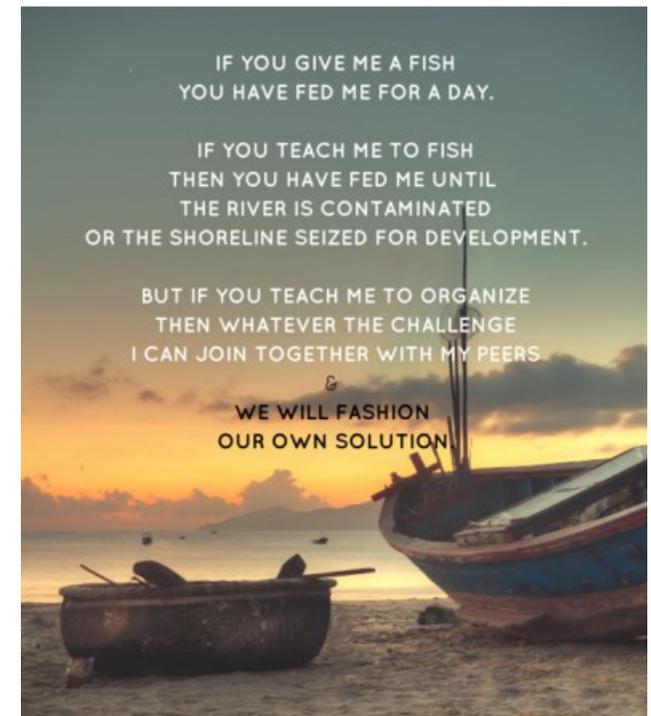
LEAD looks at problems systemically and implements solutions that fix the structures leading to injustice, and not just symptoms of injustice. Also, unlike advocacy groups that focus on one single issue and speak on behalf of others, we are completely community-led. We usually focus on one issue per year that is determined locally. LEAD trains and develops leaders in the community to speak and act on their own behalf.

### HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE

leaddayton.org  
leaddayton@gmail.com  
11 W. Monument Avenue  
Dayton, OH 45402  
937-252-2018



The mission of Leaders for Equality and Action in Dayton (L.E.A.D.) is to build a strong, grassroots community organization, dedicated to empowering and preparing people of faith to work for a greater degree of justice in Montgomery County.



# CURRENT INITIATIVES

LEAD is an organization of Dayton area congregations. It was founded in 1992 and is a 501(c)3 tax exempt, non-profit and non-partisan. Since being incorporated, low income and working class leaders have had success in addressing over 20 community problems in the Dayton community, such as:

## SOME RECENT VICTORIES

- **RTA Bus route 1 serves Beaver Creek's Fairfield Commons area.** After a long struggle, public transportation is possible from Dayton into Beaver Creek where there are many jobs, services and healthcare.
- **Employment Re-entry for Ex-offenders** The City of Dayton and Montgomery County passed "Ban the Box" ordinances which will put a criminal record statement at the end of the hiring process rather than at the top of the application form.
- **Family Bus Pass** In 2012 over 6,000 passes were sold. This program is still going strong, saving low-income families 40% on transportation costs.
- **Pay Day Lending** Interest rates have been reduced from 391% to 28%. Half of payday lending stores in Ohio have closed since LEAD joined a coalition to help pass payday lending legislation.
- **Vacant Housing** The City of Dayton was planning on tearing down only 70 vacant and dilapidated houses. Because much more was needed, LEAD pushed the city and over 600 were taken down.
- **Living Wage** Paying employees a living wage is still a requirement for companies with over \$100,000 a year in business in the City of Dayton. This ordinance, The Dayton Economic Attraction Program was renewed after its initial 5 years.

## ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH

1 in 4 people will suffer from mental illness in their lifetime. 30% of individuals in the Montgomery County jail suffer from a mental illness, costing our county an estimated \$7 million a year. Over 60% of homeless individuals in our shelters are mentally ill.

The Montgomery County Health Department has made mental health one of its top three community health priorities and has committed to decreasing wait times for services, increasing mental health screenings, and increasing information about mental health services. LEAD is asking the Health Department to create a communication strategy, centered in congregations, to share information with the public about available mental health resources and the County's plans to expand services. LEAD is also asking that this plan provides the public an opportunity to share the challenges they face when attempting to access mental health care.

The problems related to the intersection of mental illness and the criminal justice system are not addressed as part of the Montgomery County Health Improvement Plan. LEAD will continue to research this problem, meeting with public officials, researching programs in other cities that have addressed these problems, and working to ensure justice for all those suffering from mental illness, especially those in jail. As we continue our research, LEAD is asking Sheriff Plummer to commit to researching solutions to mental health care access and the criminal justice system.

## DAYTON WORKS INITIATIVE

The uneven economic development in Montgomery County has long been a major concern of our members. While some more prosperous areas have an abundance of shopping, eating and entertainment opportunities, other large segments with less wealthy residents have almost no choices. Just getting to a grocery is a problem for many.

In early 2014, we researched the problem and settled on a solution that could make a real difference in northwest Montgomery County. In an effort to promote common ownership of productive assets that anchor capital and jobs locally, LEAD created the "Dayton Works Initiative."

LEAD has been working with the City of Dayton to bring the Democracy Collaborative to Montgomery County. The program which originated in Cleveland, works to develop employee owned small business with connections to "anchor institutions." In May, the city entered into a \$45,000 agreement with Democracy Collaborative to begin this program. See [democracycollaborative.org](http://democracycollaborative.org)

## QUALITY PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

Ensuring that every child begins school on track academically and socially is one of the best investments we can make as a region. Currently almost 2/3 of Montgomery County children are not ready for kindergarten when they start school. The children who are behind when they start often stay behind, doing poorly on the mandated third grade reading and fourth grade math tests. And good scores on those tests have been linked to high school graduation, higher education degrees or certificates and success in the workforce. Not surprisingly, poor academic achievement can be linked to criminal behavior and incarceration. It is not difficult to connect the dots. An abundance of research shows that a high quality preschool experience can prevent many of the common and critical problems educators see in the primary grades, setting the stage for a child to succeed in school and, later, in life. Many parents want a high quality preschool experience for their children, but simply cannot afford the high price tag.

Recently LEAD decided to partner with Learn to Earn/Ready Set Soar because its goal is the same as ours: to ensure the availability of quality, affordable preschool for all four-year-olds in the county. This year we are actively promoting its Preschool Power campaign, which aims to raise awareness about the value of preschool and to secure pledges from citizens stating their support for the campaign. By signing the pledges, (*not financial*) you are helping to build the political will needed to make quality preschool for all a reality. When quality preschool is available for all who want it, not only will our children benefit, but the entire region will benefit.

To take the pledge, go to:  
[LearnToEarnDayton.org/preschoolpower](http://LearnToEarnDayton.org/preschoolpower)

## LET THE PEOPLE RIDE

People have spoken about their need for safe, convenient RTA stops at the Dayton Mall entrances. Disabilities make traveling anywhere tough! So we say, "No destination without transportation!"

An Americans for Disability Complaint was filed December 15, 2015 against the Glimcher Realty Company who own the mall. Our allies in this case are The Access Center for Independent Living and Disability Access of Columbus.

While awaiting a legal decision, demonstrations will continue as well as research on the planning to renovate the mall and its surroundings.