House of Bread – for RCPC history

House of Bread is an ecumenical non-profit organization founded in January 2017 to support and strengthen formerly incarcerated women through friendship, job skill training, and mentoring. While House of Bread was not formed as a ministry of RCPC, two of the three co-founders, Jordan Hertz and Lisa Goad, are members of the congregation and RCPC has been tremendously supportive of House of Bread. The idea for the organization originated with Jen Brothers who shared the concept with Jordan and Lisa in the fall of 2016. After legally incorporating and gaining 501(c)(3) status in early 2017, the co-founders presented a request for start-up funding to the RCPC Endowment Board, where the proposal was met with unwavering support and encouragement. House of Bread received $20,000 in endowment funds to purchase kitchen equipment, set up an office, and operate for the first year. RCPC also generously provided House of Bread with office space in the church basement and numerous RCPC members stepped up as program volunteers.

House of Bread ran its first program session in the fall of 2017, a six-week program that served five students, four of whom completed the entire program and graduated in November. Each student in the inaugural session came to the LEAP community kitchen in Roanoke’s West End neighborhood once per week to bake bread alongside volunteers from the community. Students then helped sell the bread at bread stands set up outside the Village Grill in the Grandin Village and downtown in the City Market Building. Additionally, each student received ServSafe Certification, met weekly with a volunteer mentor, and received a small educational stipend. At the end of the session, House of Bread held a mock interview clinic and graduation ceremony at Second Presbyterian Church.

To date (as of January 2020), House of Bread has run five sessions (now 8 weeks instead of 6) and graduated a total of 24 students. More than 20 RCPC members have volunteered with House of Bread as bakers, mentors, bread stand volunteers, and mock interviewers. Additionally, RCPC members have provided food for events, helped with student transportation, and have supported House of Bread in prayer and through donations and bread purchases. RCPC benevolent funds also fund approximately 10% of House of Bread’s annual operating expenses. Through partnership with RCPC, the House of Bread board and staff look forward to continuing to serve the community and live out the gospel here in Roanoke.