

Diaper bank, K-C awarded for partnership

Maureen Wallenfang , USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin 12:58 p.m. CT April 20, 2017



Recipients:

Fox Cities Diaper Bank and Kimberly-Clark Corp.

Award: Business Partnership

Background: United Way Fox Cities established the Fox Cities Diaper Bank seven years ago at the prompting of Kimberly-Clark.

"A study that Kimberly-Clark and Huggies sponsored, Every Little Bottom, revealed that one in three parents struggled with providing diapers for their babies," said Kimberly-Clark's Aric Melzl, brand director for Huggies.

"Most people didn't know there was such a gap out there in diaper need," he said. "Food stamps and WIC (Women, Infants and Children) are nutritional programs and didn't cover them because diapers were not a nutritional item. There still isn't any social program today that covered those needs."

"United Way's research confirmed that families in the Fox Cities were struggling," said United Way Fox Cities spokeswoman Nanci Micke. "In fact, our local food pantries told us that they could not keep up with the requests for diapers for their clients."

Without disposable diapers, she said, children are not allowed to participate in early childhood education programs or attend most daycare facilities.

Volunteer footprint: As a founding partner of the bank, K-C has donated products, financial resources, volunteer support from its employees and advice on products over the years.

The bank provides diapers to 875 babies from low-income families every month. Since 2011, about 2 million diapers have been distributed to local families.

Continuing aid: Kimberly-Clark again came to the emergency aid of the diaper bank earlier this year when United Way discovered the theft of more than 1,777 cases of donated diapers valued at \$45,000 from the bank. Two men were arrested, but very few of the diapers were recovered.

Kimberly-Clark proved its deep commitment to the diaper bank by delivering more than 100,000 diapers to cover the missing amount, plus 30,000 more.

"We share a commitment to this community," said Kimberly-Clark's Melzl. "The silver lining was that there were other folks who wanted to help out as well."

Others who stepped up included Amazon, which donated 100,000 diapers and 200,000 wipes. Procter & Gamble sent a truckload of diapers. Media outlets sponsored diaper drives.

"We got checks from all over the country," said Micke. "Young moms dropped off diapers in our office with their babies in tow."

Micke said while there have been many partners in the bank, Kimberly-Clark's steadfast commitment has kept the diaper bank going.

“We wouldn’t have a diaper bank today without Kimberly-Clark's help,” she said. “We are now one of the largest diaper banks in the state, and one of only two United Ways in the country that run a diaper bank.”

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Celebrating Volunteers: The honorees

Today’s feature is part of an eight-day series featuring the 2017 honorees of Celebrating Volunteers, a collaborative effort between The Post-Crescent and the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region to annually honor outstanding volunteers in the Fox Valley. The winners will be celebrated at a banquet at 6 p.m. May 2 at the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel in downtown Appleton. Tickets are available through April 25 at cfoxvalley.org/celebrating-volunteers.