

# Column: Fox Cities Diaper Bank is truly a community effort

Nanci Micke, For USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin Published 4:43 p.m. CT Aug. 31, 2017



Fox Cities Diaper Bank and Kimberly-Clark Corp. are the recipients of the Business Partnership Award. (2017) UW-Fox Valley's Communication and Theater Arts 106 Class

At United Way Fox Cities, we receive many messages via our website. In June of this year the following message popped into our inbox:

“We are one of the families your diaper drive helped. I just wanted to express our thanks for your generosity and kindness. When our third child was born in heart failure, our life and income was turned upside down. I have learned so much about what is truly important. I just wanted to thank everyone who helped us out and hope to pay it forward in the future.”

When I read those words I understood this was one of the 880 families who get help from the Fox Cities Diaper Bank every month. This message was a great reminder of how important it is to have a resource like the diaper bank for families in need.

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RELATED: [Diaper bank, K-C awarded for partnership](#)

What do the numbers tell us?

- 1 in 3 American families report experiencing diaper need.
- Diapers cannot be obtained with food stamps.
- Disposable diapers cost \$70 to \$80 per month per baby.
- No state or federal child safety net program allocates dollars specifically for the purchase of diapers.

- Without transportation, buying diapers at a convenience store rather than a large “big box” store can significantly increase the monthly cost of diapers.
- Infants require up to 12 diapers per day, toddlers need about 8.

When families are faced with the tough choice of buying food or diapers, they chose food and do what they can to make the diapers last. This can result in babies being exposed to potential health risks, and certainly discomfort.

The Fox Cities Diaper Bank began seven years ago as an initiative of United Way Fox Cities and Kimberly-Clark Corp., and has grown beyond any dreams we had when we began.

As a founding partner and collaborator of the Fox Cities Diaper bank, Kimberly-Clark Corp. provides ongoing support through product donations, financial resources, volunteer support and expertise on the product and industry. We are now one of the largest diaper banks in the state and our work has been recognized by the National Diaper Bank Network, United Way Worldwide and Wisconsin Public Radio.

We have received help along the way from many partners. St. Joseph Food Program and Salvation Army Fox Cities agreed to be pilot organizations to distribute diapers. Valley Packaging offered to be our physical “bank” where the diapers would be stored. Thrivent Financial stepped forward to host our very first diaper drive and worked with us to develop a template we could use for future drives.

The Post-Crescent’s Dollars for Diapers campaigns have given us the boost to be a real “bank” with meaningful diaper inventory. More than 3,000 community volunteers have been involved in repacking the diapers so we can standardize the number we distribute.

So how has the diaper bank made a difference? Since its launch in 2011, the diaper bank has provided families with more than 1.9 million diapers. On an annual basis, the diaper bank distributes 300,000 to 400,000 diapers to families in the Fox Cities. Babies who once wore the same diaper all day long are now able to have adequate changes for their good health. Parents who use child care facilities are able to go to work because they can provide the disposable diapers that are required.

At United Way, we are committed to the mission of keeping our babies healthy, but we are the first to say that the success of the Fox Cities Diaper Bank is because this community has stepped forward to help give our babies a healthy start in life.

*Nanci Micke is the vice president of marketing and communications for United Way Fox Cities.*

## **How to donate to Dollars for Diapers:**

### **Fox Cities**

Online donations can be made through the [Dollars for Diapers page](#) on the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region website: [donor.cffoxvalley.org/dollarsfordiapers](http://donor.cffoxvalley.org/dollarsfordiapers)

Donations can be dropped at United Way Fox Cities, 1455 Midway Road, Menasha

### **Brown County**

Online donations can be made through [diaper drive page](#) on the Brown County United Way website: <http://www.browncountyunitedway.org/diaperdrive/>

Donations can be dropped off at:

- » Green Bay area Festival Foods and Shopko locations
- » Brown County United Way, at 112 N. Adam St., Suite 201, Green Bay

For a full list of drop-off locations visit [the diaper drive page](#) on the Brown County United Way website.

### **Oshkosh**

Online Donations: [oshkoshunitedway.org/diapers](http://oshkoshunitedway.org/diapers)

Donations can be dropped off at Oshkosh United Way, 36 Broad St., Suite 100, Oshkosh