

Fox Cities' babies need diapers, and you can help

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Thirty percent of the \$30,000 goal has been reached in Post-Crescent Media's "Dollars for Diapers" Do It! Community Challenge, which benefits the Fox Cities Diaper Bank.

But with less than three weeks until the campaign's scheduled end, a boost is needed to make the difference for more than 2,000 Fox Valley children. "We've hit \$9,020 in donations, including matching grants, but we're looking to this giving community to push us over the top in the very near future," said Dan Flannery, Post-Crescent Media's executive editor.

Three \$5,000 matching grants —from the J. J. Keller Foundation, Thrivent Financial and United Way Fox Cities —totaling \$15,000 would supply half of the \$30,000 total. As of Wednesday, individual donations from 92 readers, businesses, civic and community groups and faith communities have totaled \$4,510 at the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region.

"We're looking for a strong finish, with another \$10,490 or more in community donations," Flannery said. "This campaign is critical to many low-income families who struggle to keep their infants and toddlers dry and healthy."

The Fox Cities Diaper Bank, created in 2011 and administered by United Way Fox Cities, supplements the existing diaper supply that low-income families already have. It's not intended to be the lone supply of disposable diapers, which are mandatory for child care facilities. Further, many low-income families don't have private laundry equipment, and coin-operated laundry facilities do not allow cloth diapers.

Infants and toddlers who stay too long in wet and soiled diapers can quickly develop diaper rash, which can lead to more serious illnesses and conditions. And when that happens, a parent can often be called on to stay home with a sick child, instead of staying on the job. A healthy change of diapers can cost more than \$100 per month, according to the diaper bank's website (www.foxcitiesdiaperbank.com). Research in Kimberly-Clark's "Every Little Bottom" study in 2010 showed that diaper need is one of the most critical issues for low-income families, and the "safety net" programs such as WIC do not cover diapers. "This is a pretty easy problem to avoid, but low-income families need the help of this community," Flannery said. "Keeping little bottoms free of rash and disease makes a major difference for parents who are struggling to make ends meet. "The "Dollars for Diapers" campaign began on Mother's Day (May 11) and is scheduled to end on Father's Day, June 15.

At a glance

The Fox Cities Diaper Bank, founded in 2011 and administered by United Way Fox Cities, distributes about 300,000 diapers to families in need. On average, 600 children receive diapers on a monthly basis. More than 900 community volunteers have been involved in repackaging diapers for distribution to families.

For more information, call the United Way at 920-954-7210 or go to www.foxcitiesdiaperbank.org.

To contribute online to Post-Crescent Media's "Dollars for Diapers" Do It! Community Challenge, go to cfoxvalley.org.

To donate in person, the Community Foundation is at 4455 W. Lawrence St., Appleton, near the Fox River Mall area.