

United Way Fox Cities kicks off annual drive to stock local diaper bank

Madeline Heim, Appleton Post-Crescent

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Kimberly-Clark employees help repack diapers for the Fox Cities Diaper Bank in 2015. (Photo: Courtesy of United Way Fox Cities)

When Kimberly-Clark Corp. brand Huggies authored a [2010 study](#) on diaper needs across the U.S., it found that one in three families struggled to give their children a clean diaper.

Nine years later, that statistic hasn't changed.

"Unless it's in front of you, it's really easy to forget about," said Sandra Drexler, vice president of resource development for United Way Fox Cities. "For families who can provide an adequate supply, it's just part of what you do ... you don't think about the fact that not everybody can do it."

Though the need remains high, support for the issue is climbing — including in the Fox Cities, where United Way will kick off its 2019 drive Wednesday to collect diapers and raise funds for the regional diaper bank that assists families in need throughout the region.

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RELATED: [United Way Fox Cities hits \\$8.5 million fundraising goal](#)

The Donations for Diapers fundraiser, established in 2011 by The Post-Crescent to collect supplies and money for the Fox Cities Diaper Bank, will run through September, ending with National Diaper Need Awareness Week Sept. 23-29.

After collecting and purchasing the diapers and related items like wipes, supplies for adult incontinence and menstrual products, United Way stores them in a warehouse, repackages them and sends them to 15 area agencies that distribute them to families in need.

The biggest distributors are the Salvation Army of Outagamie County and St. Joseph Food Program, said Rhonda Hannemann, community development program officer for United Way Fox Cities. Other partnering programs include Winnebago County's WIC program, Outagamie County's Birth to 3 Early Intervention Program, Calumet County Public Health and Appleton-based Homeless Connections.

For some families, it may be an incentive to welcome help from those agencies, she added.

"It's an opportunity for the agency or program to say to a family, 'We'd like to sit down with you, find out how you're doing, and oh, by the way, we're bringing a free bag of diapers with us,'" Hannemann said.

With the help of hundreds of volunteers, the Fox Cities bank sends more than 50,000 diapers every other month.

Diaper sizes 2 and 5 are most needed, Hannemann said, and those who are interested in contributing can donate at unitedwayfoxcities.org or drop off diapers at United Way's Appleton location or at local Festival Food stores.

At the end of the day, a diaper isn't just a diaper, Drexler said. A supply of clean ones keeps a baby healthy, paves the way to enroll in child care and makes parents feel like they're able to provide.

"What does that free bag of diapers mean for a family? That they're not alone, that they're getting help," Hannemann said. "They are part of a village."

Contact Madeline Heim at 920-996-7266 or mheim@gannett.com. Follow her on Twitter at [@madeline_heim](https://twitter.com/madeline_heim).