



Let's Revolutionize Health for the Green Bay Community

We know the basics that people living in poverty struggle to afford: food and shelter. Some live on the streets, go without meals or make unimaginable sacrifices just to carry on the day-to-day. Beyond these essentials, there are many basic needs often overlooked.

Meet Amelia, a single mom raising two kids in Green Bay, WI — one school age and the other still in diapers. Amelia puts in the hours, earning an income to feed, shelter and support her family. Yet, when her daughter is sick and needs to stay home from school - she's stuck. She calls into work.

The missed income means Amelia is going to have to choose between a few meals or diapers for her younger son. So, she simply stretches her diaper supply. Her son is left with a severe rash from spending too much time in overused diapers. She needs to take him to the doctor. She calls into work, again.

As a single mom, Amelia doesn't have any other choice. But, her situation could change with the financial burden of affording diapers removed. Her son wouldn't be suffering a rash, and Amelia wouldn't miss work again, when she desperately needs the income.

In Brown County, 31% of children live in single-parent families, according to County Health Rankings data from the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. We know that young, single moms are very susceptible to poverty and the hurdles they face lead to under or unemployment, and therefore extremely low income.

Even in families with two parents, the struggle can look similar. Across Wisconsin, 44 percent of young children live in low-income families — nearly 50/50 chance that parents are struggling to provide for their children. The flip of a coin!

Alleviating the financial burden of diapers and other basic hygiene supplies creates room for families, shelters and other caregivers to afford more basic needs and empowers people to live clean, healthy and active lives. Every small step makes a big difference in ending poverty.



Shifting the Definition of Basic Needs

The statistics go beyond the limits of government defined poverty levels. The United Way of Wisconsin ALICE report shows us that one-third of the families across our state cannot afford the basics of housing, food, healthcare, childcare and transportation. ALICE is defined as: **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed, and assesses the number of people who earn above the federal poverty level, but not enough to afford a basic household budget.

And the number of families living in this category are on the rise, with a 5 percent increase between 2010 and 2016, according to ALICE reports.

With an average cost of more than \$70 per month, diapers are an expense many families simply cannot bear. Diapers cannot be obtained with food stamps or WIC, and are taxable. Families stretch their baby's supply by re-using disposables, extended use of diapers or simply going without. These decisions affect the physical, mental and financial health of the household.

Further, without ample diapers, children can't go to childcare. Childcare facilities require at least a day's worth of diapers for children to attend. When children can't go to childcare, a caregiver can't work. When a caregiver can't work, income isn't earned, thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

From the Beginning

In January 2011, Jake's Diapers Founders Ann Hinkfuss and Stephanie Bowers participated in a mission trip to Peru. While there, they visited an orphanage that was re-using disposable diapers as a way to cut costs and afford other basic necessities, such as food.

This experience stuck in their minds, but life continued as it were for some time. Soon enough, Stephanie had her own little one — Jake — running around in cloth diapers.

In 2013, Ann was preparing for a return trip and in April the two started collecting cloth diapers to donate to this orphanage. Some of Jake's surplus diapers made the cut for donations.

Thus, Jake's Diapers was born. What started with a goal of helping only 15 babies at this orphanage in Peru has now grown to an organization with a global reach, having impacted more than 20 countries while we continue to grow.



Though not her only motivator, Stephanie's role as a mom continues to influence her commitment to the cause.

"I look at them every day and wonder what would I do if I had to choose between food & diapers?" Stephanie said. "The only difference between my babies and the babies we serve is where they were born."

In 2016, Jake's Diapers saw tremendous growth in its supporters and therefore its reach. The nonprofit has since been able to expand its network of Diaper Drop locations globally while also incorporating more outreach across the United States and locally. While we continue our support globally, we've focused on efforts into strategically defined regions include Northeast Wisconsin, National (United States), Puerto Rico and Global. We continue to provide Diapers for All Ages, added a Pilot Project for Period Products and also support areas in Disaster Relief efforts.

Be The Change: Why We Need Your Help Now

A gap exists in our region of Wisconsin where people in need are unable to be served. The Fox Cities Diaper Bank, an initiative of United Way Fox Cities, serves a limited geographic area of Outagamie, northern Calumet and northern Winnebago counties.

Jake's Diapers Eastern Wisconsin Diaper Bank closes this gap and is able to work with agencies who do not have a partnership with the Fox Cities Diaper Bank, or are outside of its service area. This has been an essential offer in our community.

"The diapers that we receive and hand out to families has been a life-saver," Wendy of Family Services-Parent Connection said. "Many of the families have to choose between buying diapers, paying a bill or feeding their family. the gift of diapers makes the choice a little easier."

Many months of the year, our weather adds another hurdle to consider. For those struggling with poverty, heating a home during our state's cold months adds additional financial burdens to an already difficult situation. Then, there's those struggling with homelessness to consider. Hypothermia can set in when temperatures drop below 50 degrees Fahrenheit, **according to the National Healthcare for the Homeless Coalition**. At any given time, the Fox Cities typically has between 300 to 350 people dealing with homelessness, according to a **Post Crescent article**, and shelters struggle to provide for all those in need due to capacity issues.



Access to diapers and other basic needs can provide a pathway to affording shelter, as our diaper recipients have already explained.

How Jake's Helps

Our 2019 goal is to solve diaper need for a minimum of 1,500 children in Northeast Wisconsin. Our long-term goal is to see a reduction in the number of families in Northeast Wisconsin who struggle with poverty.

Our community partnerships allow us to focus our funds and volunteer support on eliminating the financial burden of hygiene necessities so caretakers can afford other basic needs. This creates long-term change for communities to maintain health for all, and every small step makes a big difference in ending poverty.

If you or someone you know is part of an organization in need, Jake's Diapers ask that you first fill out their application, which can be e-mailed upon request. Jake's reviews, prayerfully considers, and decides if we can help each organization that submits an application. After an application is approved, the organization is ready to be helped! Jake's arranges for hand delivery of the hygiene necessities with each partner organization.

How We Serve Wisconsin

For some families in Wisconsin, there is no one else to turn to for support when raising small children other than our community partners.

"An example of a family we work with is a single young mom who is estranged from her family," said Wendy of Family Services-Parent Connection. "Her child has significant health issues that require mom to take the child to Milwaukee every month. She has lost her job due to missing work for all of the medical appointments. The child was enrolled in a childcare but can no longer go back because of a \$900.00 unpaid bill. Since she lost her job, she can not pay her rent. It is a cycle for this mom that she can't seem to get out of and the lack of support is the driving issue to her situation."

For Family Services-Parent Connection and all of our Wisconsin partners, the access to hygiene items that we provide to their families is an essential piece of their puzzle to helping this individuals out of poverty.



Our Impact

Since the Eastern Wisconsin Diaper Bank launched in 2017, we've seen positive change. Over half of recipients in our pilot project stated that receiving diapers enabled them to go to work, look for work, go to school or take children to childcare. To date, this collaborative effort helps nearly 1,000 children per month through our network of now 20 community partners in the program.

We know that recipients of diapers through this program have been enabled to:

- Take their child to childcare
- Buy non-food items
- Reduce stress
- Buy food
- Pay other bills

Families served through this initiative told us the extra funds were allowing them to buy or save for the following:

- Rent
- Gas
- Child's future
- Car
- Living
- Crib
- House
- Clothes

We also found that the number one benefit to receiving diapers was to reduce stress (55%), followed by making the child happier (51%). Reducing household stress and happier children can reduce risk of depression, anxiety and child abuse. This has also been observed in professional research studies (Pediatrics, Aug 2013).

This is the impact we can have as we continue to solve diaper need for working moms and families in our area. Happier families who are able to work can support themselves and break the cycle of poverty. That's the power of a diaper.