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SPECIAL TO THE ST. LOUIS AMERICAN

PARENTS AS TEACHERS JOINS ST. LOUIS DIAPER BANK IN GIVING BACK TO COMMUNITY DURING NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE
Groups work to provide free menstrual products to low-income women

From Staff Reports

ST. LOUIS, MO – Sept. 19, 2019 – Realizing that one in five area low-income women cannot afford adequate menstrual products, the Parents as Teachers National Center (PATNC) has teamed with the St. Louis Area Diaper Bank to raise money to buy them tampons and pads.

Headquartered in St. Louis, MO., PATNC is raising money through an online donation drive called the “Period Project Drive” to purchase 35,000 period products being stock-piled at the Diaper Bank in Wellston. The products will later be transported to the Hyatt Regency St. Louis at the Arch hotel, where PATNC is hosting its annual international conference on Oct. 14 – 17.

About 1,400 early childhood development professionals will attend the conference and help assemble individual menstrual kits for distribution to area needy women free of charge. Some PAT staffers began the assembly process at the Diaper bank last week as part of PAT’s commitment to the National Day of Service on September 11.

This year marks the 35th anniversary of Parents as Teachers’ founding in St. Louis. The non-profit organization known for its effectiveness of strengthening families through its home visiting model, has been commemorating it with year-long events across its national network of 1,036 affiliate partners.

“Earlier in the year we asked our affiliates how they wanted to celebrate our 35th anniversary and the overwhelming response was that they wanted to get involved in local projects where they could make a difference,” said Constance Gully, PATNC’s president and chief executive officer. “The Period Project represents one of those efforts here in St. Louis.”
Diaper Bank Founding Executive Director Jessica Adams said the Period Project helps ensure that individuals in need have access to essential period products required to fully participate in daily life with dignity and works to raise awareness about the causes and consequences of “period poverty” in the St. Louis region.

“Period Poverty,” Adams said, “occurs when there is a lack of access to an adequate supply of menstrual products like pads or tampons, which forces women to use inferior or unhealthy alternatives like socks, rags, even diapers to address their monthly cycles.

"It is an indignity experienced by thousands regularly. Research shows that 64 percent of low-income women in St. Louis experience period poverty,” she said.

PATNC began partnering with the Diaper Bank about two years ago. As a non-profit committed to strengthening low-income families, PATNC distributes emergency packs of diapers, it gets from the Diaper Bank to families through its Show Me Strong Families (SMSF) community engagement initiative, which serves families in the Normandy School District (NSD) and St. Louis City.

Donna Givens, SMSF’s manager of community partnerships and groups, said each participating family receives 50 free diapers a month, and more if there is an emergent need.

“Many of our families tell us that it makes them happier, their children happier, and they are able to buy toiletries, and pay bills with the money saved by not having to purchase the products provided through this partnership,” Givens said.

Since 2014, SMSF has served 745 families with 936 children through more than 6,000 personal visits in their homes. An additional 2,000 children in the NSD footprint were screened for developmental delays and health or vision concerns.

To donate to the Period Project, visit https://parentsasteachers.org/period-project-2019

About Parents as Teachers
Parents as Teachers builds strong communities, thriving families and children that are healthy, safe and ready to learn by matching parents and caregivers with trained professionals who make regular personal home visits during a child’s earliest years in life, from pregnancy through kindergarten. The internationally-recognized evidence-based home visiting model is backed by 35 years of research-proven outcomes for children and families. PAT currently serves nearly 200,000 families in all 50 U.S. states, 115 Tribal organizations, six other countries, and one U.S. territory. Parents As Teachers National Center, Inc., is a non-profit organization headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri.

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At left: Parents as Teachers President/CEO Constance Gully and Donna O’Brien VP, professional and program development, and Kerry Caverly, PAT senior VP, chief program officer, prepare feminine hygiene product kits for distribution to area low-income women at the St. Louis Diaper Bank as part of PAT’s giving back to the community initiative on the National Day of Service.
From left: Parents as Teacher staffers Montrice Humphrey, Carmen Qualls, Antionette Becerra, and Angela Gardner prepare feminine hygiene product kits for distribution to area low-income women at the St. Louis Diaper Bank as part of PAT’s giving back to the community initiative on the National Day of Service.
Parents as Teachers staffers Randall Hinton, Madeliene Brice, and Rick Evers prepare feminine hygiene product kits for distribution to area low-income women at the St. Louis Diaper Bank as part of PAT’s giving back to the community initiative on the National Day of Service.