

Schools come together to fight Period Poverty



Teens collect over 6,000 tampons and pads for their community

People who experience menstruation sometimes take an ongoing supply of tampons or pads for granted. Some people reach under their bathroom sink or on a trip to their local pharmacy when they run out of period supplies. However, one in five low-income women or teens has missed school or work due to their lack of access to period products. Additionally, menstruating people are sometimes forced to use replacements such as socks, t-shirts, or toilet paper, or they prolong their use of the limited number of products they have, leading to health issues.



Mallory Fisher and Lucy Rothgery from Elyria Catholic's Junior Senate show some of the period products collected during their drive.

Women's Fund, an affiliate fund of the Community Foundation of Lorain County, has launched Change the Cycle, a concerted effort to combat Period Poverty in Lorain County.

They are working with community members to collect period products to help stabilize this problem and make products available for all menstruating people, including within our school communities.

Several Lorain County high schools are partnering with the Women's Fund to bring attention to this problem. In recent months, the Avon High School National Honor Society, the Amherst Steele Girls Cross Country team, and the Elyria Catholic High School Junior

Senate conducted period product drives to raise awareness of this national problem. The schools collected over 6K menstrual pads and tampons for distribution. "Many people do not realize there are hundreds of girls in Lorain County that don't know if they will be able to attend school the next day because their supply has been depleted," states Isabella Barb, junior at Elyria Catholic High School. "Our goal is someday to provide free products in all our school restrooms. Students should never have to stay home or feel embarrassed just because they are menstruating."

At Elyria High School, teacher Amanda Belcher and members of the Young Upstanders Club are now offering free products to teens in need. "Thanks to the Women's Fund, we now have a steady supply of tampons and pads for our students," states Belcher. "While their supply at home may be low, students know they can attend school and receive products. Meeting this basic need helps our students become empowered and successful adults." According to the Alliance for Period Supplies, attendance rates increase by 4% in schools that offer free period products.

Women's Fund aims to collect 1M pads and tampons and has partnered with the United Way of Greater Lorain County to help distribute the products to individuals, non-profit organizations, libraries, and schools. Any funds raised will help purchase supplies in bulk for pennies on the



Students from Elyria High School's Youth Upstanders provide free period products to their fellow students.

dollar. A \$35 donation will provide a year's supply of period products to a menstruating person. A donation of \$135 will supply a period product dispenser to one of our local libraries or schools. If you are interested in hosting a supply drive or making a monetary contribution, please visit peoplewhocare.org. For updates on the Women's Fund, please register for the Community Foundation of Lorain County's newsletter at peoplewhocare.org. Data supplied by the Alliance for Period Supplies

Women's Fund



Avon National Honor Society members made educating other students about period poverty fun and engaging while collecting over 2500 pieces and \$500 in donations. Avery Hanna, right, shows off one of their creative marketing flyers.



Amherst Steele High School Girls Cross Country team held a period supply drive during a team dinner.