

Community Presbyterian to begin new DIAPER ministry

Written by Janna Ross

Wednesday, 04 June 2014 07:45 -

It's simple. Where there is a need, there should be a way to make it happen. The simple idea came to the minds of a local group of women who have learned of the need for a type of new ministry for the local community.

Community Presbyterian Church's Morning Circle have worked to begin a Diaper Ministry, the DIAPER Project (Diapering Infants and Providing Emergency Resources).

"The Morning Circle desires to start a diaper ministry to provide diapers and other essential items needed for infants and small children within our community. Mothers, fathers, and guardians who are struggling need peace of mind knowing that their babies will not do without," stated Donna McCreary Bowen, one of the organizers of the new ministry.

When asked why they have started the new project, Bowen, answered, "Wearing a soiled diaper for too long jeopardizes a baby's health. Daycare requires each baby to have a full day's supply of diapers or they are turned away. Obviously parents need access to child care. One out of three families in America struggle to buy diapers."

She continued, "Food stamps and WIC cannot be used to buy diapers and most coin laundry mats don't allow cloth diapers. According to statistics, 5.9 million babies are living in low-income families across America. The statistics prove a need for the ministry."

A Diaper Ministry is not common in the local area. The closest diaper ministry or diaper bank Bowen has found is in New Albany and is ran by a Presbyterian Church, St. John's. This diaper ministry is only offered to Floyd County residents. The St. John's diaper ministry received a grant from the Horseshoe Casio to help with funds.

"We have just been thinking and thinking on this. There is such a need in our local community. St. John's has been extremely supportive and helpful in helping start this local diaper ministry," Bowen added.

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Researching the local area, Bowen determined that the local food pantries cannot offer a diaper ministry but there is still a need to help those in the community.

According to Bowen, the Hope Center located at First Baptist Church in Charlestown helped 800 people in December last year.

“I don’t know what the exact numbers are for the North Clark Outreach Center, but I know they are still helping many families per month. But the Hope Center nor the North Clark Outreach Center focus on infants and toddlers,” Bowen stated.

Bowen added more statistics that helped determine the desire to begin the new diaper ministry.

“Sixty percent of local children are on reduced or free lunches. Jonathan Jennings and Pleasant Ridge, along with New Washington Elementary, are all now Title 1 schools. There is such a need for this ministry in our community,” Bowen stated.

The DIAPER Project is a three phase project. Currently, the project is in the first phase and is ready for the fundraising aspect.

“We are now needing to begin fundraising for the project. Depending on how well the fundraising goes, my goal is to have the ministry going by the holiday season,” Bowen explained.

During the fundraising phase the group is seeking donations of product including diapers, wipes, bathing supplies, teething aids, diaper rash ointment, nutritional food for children under three years of age such as cereal and jars of baby food.

“I would also like to see donations of baby laundry soap like Dreft,” Bowen stated. “We want to grow. We want to be able to do medical supplies like band aids, Neosporin, pacifiers and bottles.”

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Bowen added, "We are ready for the fundraising to begin. We have the full support of the Presbyterian Women and Presbytery."

The local DIAPER Project is also in need of volunteers.

"I want to contact the Presbyterian Churches in Henryville, Nabb and New Washington and see if we can work together to make this successful. Volunteers will make this happen," Bowen said.

The first steps of Phase One have been completed. After the fundraising drive for phase one, the group will work to: Host a Diaper Drive and raise public awareness; Prepare a room with shelving and cabinets for storage; Prepare a room with furniture, computer, office supplies, information sheets, inventory sheets and telephone; Register with National Diaper Bank Network; Write grant proposals; Establish separate bank accounts through Presbyterian Women; Train volunteers; Stock donations and Arrange for inspection through the Clark County Health Department.

Phase Two of the project will include: Open diaper bank to the public; Continue to contact other agencies for continued support; Develop ecumenical relationships with other women's groups who can donate monetarily, products and volunteers; After six months of operations, contact Feed the Children; Expand to include bathing items, infant formula, baby food, medical supplies such as, but not limited to, teething helps, bandages, medical cream, and other over the counter items for children; Contact businesses for donations of packages of diapers and other baby items they can not sell.

Phase Three of the project will include: Distribute fresh milk and juice; Offer classes and have information in the following: benefits of breast feeding, nutritional meal preparation and support groups and/or information to locate such groups; Counseling services with the help of Presbyterian Seminary and Apply for a Birthday Offering Grant through Presbyterian Women.

The DIAPER Project will have a few requirements for one to be able to obtain help from the new ministry. The requirements will be: You must reside within the community; You must provide proof of residency; You must provide the birth certificate for each child; You must

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provide a valid ID. The ministry will be available to help a family once a month.

“We will be a helping hand. Our goal is to have this operating by the end of the year and the holiday season,” Bowen concluded.

If you would like to make a donation to the DIAPER Project send your donation to Community Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 369, Charlestown, IN 47111. Please make checks payable to DIAPER Project.

For more information about the DIAPER Project please contact Donna McCreary Bowen at mtlincoln@hotmail.com.