



NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

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(10/15/24) Southern 7 September Diaper Drive a Success (Donations to Support Families Enrolled in WIC and Head Start)

In September, Southern 7 Health Department held its first “Bundles of Joy” Diaper Drive in response to the growing diaper insecurity in the southernmost seven counties in Illinois. Through generous support of local businesses and community members, over 8,900 diapers were collected and will be distributed to Southern 7 WIC and Head Start sites in the coming days.

Diapers and monetary donations were collected at Dollar General Store sites in Cairo, Cobden, Golconda, Karnak, Rosiclare, and Vienna. Family Dollar Store in Vienna, Big John’s Grocery in Metropolis, Edward Jones in Anna, and Kroger in Anna. The drive also collected various baby cleaning essentials and raised nearly \$1000 to purchase more diapers.

“We are overwhelmed at the outpouring of support for the families we serve,” said Shawna Rhine, Community Outreach Coordinator. “These diapers will help ease the expense burden for so many families, while keeping their children happy and healthy.” Diapers will be available to families enrolled in Southern 7 WIC and Head Starts programs while supplies last.

Clean diapers are a basic need of every baby and toddler, and are a growing problem in the United States. According to new data from the National Diaper Bank Network, 1 in 2 U.S. families can’t afford enough diapers to keep their infant or child clean, dry, and healthy. As a result these babies are more vulnerable to painful rashes, urinary tract infections, toxic stress, and more trips to the doctor.

The American Academy of Pediatrics reported that on average newborns need 10 to 12 diapers per day, or 300 for the first month of life, with an average cost of \$90 per month. The average child will use about 7,100 diapers before potty trained with a cost of \$78 to \$90 per month and the total average cost per year of \$936. Such added expenses are often difficult for the families served through Southern 7.

WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Supplemental Nutrition Program is a federally funded program through the U.S. Department of Agriculture that provides federal grants to states to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutrition risk by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets, information on healthy eating, and referrals to health care. WIC is available at each Southern 7 Public Health Clinic with a current enrollment of 260 infants.

Head Start is a comprehensive child development program, funded by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services and serves families with young children age birth to five. Services include the areas of education, school readiness, social service, health and family involvement. Southern 7 offers both Head Start and Early Head Start for income eligible families that live in the lower seven counties in Illinois. Head Start serves children age 3 to 5, while Early Head Start serves infants and children age 6 weeks to 3. Currently, 138 children under age 3 are enrolled in the program.

If you were unable to visit a Diaper Drive in your area, donations continue to be accepted at Southern 7 Public Health Clinics and Head Start sites in Alexander, Hardin, Johnson, Massac, Pope, Pulaski, and Union Counties throughout the year.

To see if you qualify for Southern 7 WIC or Head Start, or for more information, call 618-634-2297 or download that Southern 7 App.

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