Diaper Bank to Provide Relief for Low Income Parents

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

It’s no question that many things are more expensive when you live on an island, including necessities for young parents. Emily Arnick works with the Cama’i Home Visiting Program through the Kodiak Area Native Association and estimates the average supply of diapers for one child per year costs $1,296 in Kodiak. She said a minimum wage job only pays about $14,024 per year, meaning almost ten percent of a parent’s income could go toward diapers alone.

Arnick said that’s a huge amount of money and could cause unwanted stress, especially for a single parent.

“Which ultimately affects a young child’s development because if mom is stressed that kind of carries over to the child. If she’s having to work two jobs then that’s less job that she can spend with her young child to teach them colors and letters and you know all those kinds of things. So I just started kind of thinking about it and thinking about it and you know there’s food banks and there’s you know other things, I wonder if there’s diaper banks.”

That’s right, diaper banks. While it might sound silly, it’s no joke, especially when programs like WIC and Food Stamps don’t cover the cost of diapers for parents struggling financially. And as Arnick discovered from her research, it isn’t a new idea, either.

“There’s a few diaper banks popping up around the country, I think there’s two others in Alaska.”

Now there are three. After seeing the need here in Kodiak, Arnick decided to start Kodiak’s first diaper bank.

“The first thing we’re going to do is have during the entire month of November we’re going to have a diaper drive basically. Kind of like a canned food drive where we’ll have receptacles out in different locations around town, the community’s been really supportive.”

People can also make monetary donations to the diaper bank, which will all be spent on purchasing diapers. From there, Arnick said KANA will collect the diapers and distribute them to the agencies that already serve Kodiak’s low income populations.

“The food bank, the women’s resource and crisis center the crisis pregnancy center, maybe WIC and they’ll distribute to families that need them. So they’ll be, even though KANA is kind of sponsoring this idea, the diapers are going to be available to everybody, Native as well as Non-Native.”

Arnick said she hopes people will contribute to the diaper drive by donating diapers of various sizes in collection boxes around town. Some of the locations to drop off diapers will be Wal-Mart, Safeway, Cost Savers, Grand Slam Toys and Books, Harborside Fly-By, A Balanced Approach and KANA’s main lobby.

She said the goal is to make this an ongoing service and hold multiple drives throughout the year, in addition to fundraising when needed.