

For immediate release:
May 28, 2019

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PRESS RELEASE:

The Rhode Island Coalition of Labor Union Women celebrates the donation of menstrual products from the #HelpASisterOutPeriod campaign

The coalition announced that over 60,000 menstrual period products will be donated, providing 2,000 girls & women of lesser means with a month's supply of free menstrual products

Providence, RI - The Rhode Island Coalition of Labor Union Women (RICLUW), with the support of the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals (RIFTHP), Teamsters Local 251, and the Rhode Island AFL-CIO, launched the #HelpASisterOutPeriod campaign in February to raise awareness for women who lack the financial means to purchase menstrual products. Today, the RI CLUW is holding a press conference with Rhode Island Food Bank CEO Andrew Schiff, Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale CEO Kate Brewster, and RIFTHP President Frank Flynn to announce the over 60,000 menstrual products they received through donations that will be used to provide menstrual care for girls and women in need.

Maureen Martin, head of RICLUW and Secretary-Treasurer of Rhode Island AFL-CIO, stated, "Every day, girls and women in Rhode Island miss days of school and work because they can't afford the menstrual products they need. Access to period products and supplies is a matter of personal dignity and it's a genuine health concern."

The #HelpASisterOurPeriod campaign brought in more than 60,000 product donations that will be used to provide a month's worth of menstrual supplies to 2,000 low-income girls and women. The campaign launched a GoFundMe page along with a promotional video of women detailing the health and safety concerns that come from a lack of access to period products.

Kate Brewster from the Jonnycake Center of Peacedale in South County stated, "Poverty comes in many different forms and sometimes we don't realize how people are affected by it. At the Jonnycake Center we strive to offer communities the resources they need to improve everyone's quality of life. For working women and women in poverty, the inability to access menstrual products when they need them can marginalize them and put them at risk for some serious health concerns."

Frank Flynn, President of RIFTHP, stated, "This is an economic, health and workplace issue. We need to continue raising awareness about menstrual inequality to both men and women."

Even with this advocacy campaign, Martin stated that there's so much more to be done. "While

this is a great first step in raising awareness and addressing the period stigma, it's not enough. We know that women of all ages who live in poverty and those facing homelessness can't afford something to eat – let alone the funds to purchase menstrual pads or tampons. Menstrual products themselves are ever increasing in price and they are just the bare necessity that a woman may need in order to care for her menstrual health. We are truly grateful and humbled by the outpouring of support, but we have a long ways to go to solve this issue. We can, and we will, end period poverty and the period stigma.”

For more information about this campaign or to make a donation, visit www.gofundme.com/helpasisteroutperiod.