

100+ Women helps group that addresses 'period poverty'

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No female should have to go without feminine hygiene products. Period.

We've all heard of poverty and the devastating effects it has on a community. But have you heard of period poverty?

Period poverty refers to the lack of access to over-the-counter products to manage menstrual bleeding; however, it can also refer to not having privacy in hygiene management or proper education on menstruation.

Period poverty causes physical, mental, and emotional challenges for women. The stigma that shrouds periods further prevents individuals from talking about it.

Because menstruation, or the period itself, involves only one sex, it is under-

standable for some people not to consider menstrual products as one of the most important things in life.

However, all people have females in their lives; therefore, it is important to have a mindset that menstrual products are essential.

According to the Journal of Global Health Reports (February 2022), 500 million people lack access to menstrual products and hygiene facilities in the United States. 16.9 million people who menstruate in the US are living in poverty.

Two-thirds of the 16.9 million low-income women in the US could not afford menstrual products in the past year, with a half of this needing to choose between menstrual products and food and 14.2% of college menstruating females in the US had experienced period poverty in the



Kay Wright, founder of Women4Women Tempe, and her team of volunteers celebrate a generous donation from 100+ Women Who Care Valley of the Sun group in Ahwatukee. The giving circle meets next Tuesday, April 16, and welcomes Ahwatukee and Tempe women to join them for their quarterly meeting. Details: 100wwcvalleyofthesun.org.

(Kim Tarnopolski/Guest Writer)

past year.

Another 10% of menstruating college students experience this monthly. Feminine hygiene products are not covered by

food stamps.

On average, a person menstruates from

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age 13 years to 51 years, every 28 days, with a 3–7-day range. This means that they will have 456 periods for about 38 years and use more than 100,000 menstrual products in their lifetime.

An increase in price and economic hardship will take a toll on access to these products that should be available for all who menstruate. (*National Library of Medicine; 11/15/2022*)

“Women are the forgotten people when it comes to homeless or low-income need,” said Kay Wright, president of Women4Women. “They have backpack drives, they have food drives, they have shoe drives, but nobody thinks about women’s menstrual needs, and it’s vital.”

Wright started Women4Women Tempe in 2016 when she learned that this basic female need was not being met in our

community. Her nonprofit assists homeless and low-income women in “maintaining their dignity and health” by distributing feminine hygiene products to those in need.

Volunteers assemble bags filled with essentials like pads, tampons, feminine wipes, and hand wipes. They distribute their products through over 35 agencies, homeless outreaches, schools, medical facilities, family resource centers, etc. which already provide other necessary services to their target population. In 2023, Women4Women Tempe delivered 44,545 of their bags.

In January, Wright shared the mission of Women4Women Tempe with her 100+ Women Who Care Valley of the Sun group in Ahwatukee. The members were moved by her presentation and selected the charity to receive their quarterly donations.

Women4Women Tempe was awarded \$15,525.

“We are absolutely thrilled to receive this donation. We have ordered two pallets of tampons, one pallet of liners, and are planning to purchase three pallets of pads,” shared Wright.

Since the chapter’s inception in 2015, 100+ Women Who Care Valley of the Sun has donated over \$1.2 Million to local charities. To learn more or to register for their upcoming giving circle next Tuesday, April 16, visit 100wwcvalleyofthesun.org. Guests are welcome.

To learn more about Women4Women Tempe, visit women4womentempe.org. There are several ways to get involved with Women4Women’s mission. You can become a volunteer, host a packing party or donation drive, or become a distribution location. ■