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## Middletown diaper drive aims to help low-income families

By Kaitlyn Schroyer, The Middletown Press

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MIDDLETOWN >> After last year's rally exceeded the organization's goal, the Diaper Bank is again teaming up with the Middlesex Diaper Committee to host a second rally.

On Sept. 10 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Middletown South Green, the group hopes to gather 1,000 diapers although 1,400 were dropped off last year.

The rally is held to mark Diaper Need Awareness Week and according to Diaper Bank executive director Janet Stolfi Alfano, nearly 30 percent of low-income families cannot afford enough diapers to keep their babies outfitted throughout the day and evening.

"The Diaper Bank is proud to serve families in Middlesex County and throughout Connecticut, where we give out 1.4 million diapers a year," said Stolfi Alfano in a statement.

At last year's event, state Sen. Dante Bartolomeo, D- Meriden, a mother of two sons, attended the drive at Veterans Memorial Gazebo at Union Park on the South Green.

The bank provides diapers to Even Start, Early Head Start and the Nurturing Family Network at Middlesex Hospital and the Family Wellness Center at the Community Health Center, all in Middletown.

"We're keeping babies clean, dry and healthy. We're also giving parents the opportunity to work. Most child-care providers will not enroll children unless their parents provide a supply of disposable diapers."

A study in Pediatrics, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, in 2013 found that mothers who cannot afford diapers exhibit more symptoms of depression and other mental health problems. Research also shows, according to a statement by the Diaper Bank, that a mother's mental health can have a profound effect on the child's development.

Despite the amount of diapers the bank tries to give out, the need is even greater, Stolfi Alfano said.

"We've got a waiting list of social service agencies who want diapers for their clients," Stolfi Alfano said in a statement. "We'd love to support them, but it's a question of resources."

This year, the Diaper Bank is celebrating its 10th year serving families in Connecticut. The diapers gathered at the rally will go toward Middlesex County families.

To learn more about how to get involved in The Diaper Bank, visit [www.thediaperbank.org](http://www.thediaperbank.org).

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