

Host a Hygiene Drive to benefit a local school district

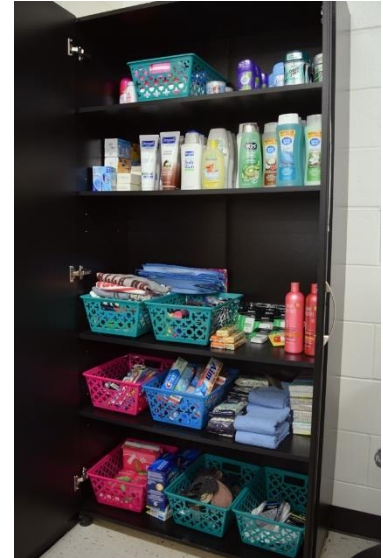
“Hygiene Poverty” Can Reduce Student Attendance

Headlines tell us that, “Kids In America Are Missing School Because They Can’t Afford Toothpaste And Tampons.” Many teachers are stocking hygiene pantries in their classrooms to provide kids with essential personal care items.

Every child deserves access to hygiene supplies. “**Hygiene poverty**” is an inability to afford everyday hygiene products, such as shampoo, toilet paper, grooming products, dish soap, etc. While the root of hygiene poverty is the lack of access to basic toiletries, its effects are made much worse by “**hygiene shaming.**” Teachers note that kids are often picked on for not being well groomed. This can negatively affect a child’s mental health.

Hardships can include:

- Inability to take a shower with shampoo, conditioner, and soap
- Using an old toothbrush or not having toothpaste
- Cleaning clothes less often (or with water only) due to lack of laundry detergent
- Fear of leaving home during your period because your improvised solutions leak and could embarrass you



The government’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infants and Children program (WIC) provide state-level monthly help to low-income households in the form of a pre-loaded card to purchase vegetables, fruit, dairy and pantry items. Recipients cannot, however, use the cards to purchase non-food items, including toiletries and sanitary products.

What you can do to help: Hold a hygiene drive at your workplace, church, or school

Most schools have food and hygiene pantries available to students. If a student needs help with hygiene items they can access them discreetly through their counselor. By providing these items, you are helping to reduce barriers to education created by a lack of basic hygiene.

1. Decide the format of your drive

Decide how and where you will collect your items. Some may find it easier to do a one or two-day drive. Others might prefer a few weeks.

Consider installing drop-off containers that volunteers routinely check allows for easy donations.

Communicate with your team regularly about the drive’s progress and recommunicate how they can still help you reach your goal.

2. **Decide the school district you would like to collect items for. We are working with the following districts this year:**

Carlisle Community School District Leah Heidemann leah.heidemann@carlislecsd.org 515-989-5389 Carlisle High School 430 School Street Carlisle, Iowa	Des Moines Public Schools Cara Edmondson cara.edmondson@dmschools.org 515-242-8364 Des Moines Public Schools District Office 2100 Fleur Drive Des Moines, Iowa
Perry Community School District Tami Valline Tamara.valline@g.perry.k12.is.us 515-465-8338 Perry High School 1200-18th Street Perry, Iowa	Saydel Community School District Shannon Larson larsonshannon@saydel.net 515-262-9325 Saydel High School 5601 NE 7th Street Des Moines, IA

3. **Sign up to hold your drive through the [Central Iowa Volunteer Hub](#)**

4. **Set a goal of number of items you would like to collect**

There is a never-ending need for these supplies, so set a goal that seems reasonable for your team.

- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Soap
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Deodorant
- Laundry detergent
- Hair products
- Feminine hygiene products
- Floss
- Face wash/acne cream

5. **Deliver the Supplies You Receive – coordinate with your school contact to organize a drop off time**

When you have your school supplies in hand, you need to deliver everything to the school you are partnering with. Make sure you have enough volunteers on hand to help, and once again strive for consistent sanitation practices. Talk with school contacts about delivering the donations.

If you have questions regarding this event, please contact Anna Schaber, Volunteer Engagement Specialist at United Way of Central Iowa, at anna.schaber@unitedwaydm.org.