

THE KINDNESS
PROJECT

HUNGER HEROES

Woman'sDay

Girls on a MISSION

When Emma and Quinn Joy learned that feminine hygiene products aren't covered by SNAP benefits, they decided to take action.

Emma (right) and Quinn, surrounded by donations in their home.



Like most kids their age, Emma Joy, 16, and her sister Quinn, 12, have jam-packed schedules—when not in school, the older one bustles to dance and acting classes, while the younger girl loves softball and art. They spend their remaining free time running Girls Helping Girls. Period., an organization they founded in December 2014 that collects tampons and sanitary napkins for needy women and girls near their South Orange, NJ, community.

Emma and Quinn grew up volunteering at senior centers and sports clinics for developmentally disabled children, and their parents, Rick and Elise Joy, encouraged them to donate clothes they didn't need. While working at a food pantry, they learned that feminine hygiene products are not covered by SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly called food stamps). "We couldn't believe it!" says Quinn. "Many women have to miss work or school because they can't afford the supplies needed to feel clean."

Small beginnings

The girls began by hosting a neighborhood brunch, asking guests to bring a box of sanitary napkins or tampons. It was a huge success, but they wanted to do more, so they spread the word on Facebook, secured some drop-off bins at local businesses and held more events. This inspired others to throw their own parties. Before long, the dining room was overflowing with boxes. "People who don't know about our cause are confused when they walk into our home, but it's a chance to start a discussion," says Emma.

Making an impact

The girls and their mom package the items into individual bags, filling each with a year's supply of products to distribute at a food pantry and an agency for previously homeless families, among other places. "Women are so grateful when we hand them a bag," says Emma. "Imagine, if you're struggling, not having to deal with that hygiene problem for a whole year. It's a huge burden off their backs."

Equally important to their mission is removing the stigma around discussing menstrual health. "People need to stop thinking this topic is weird," says Quinn. "Everyone uses toilet paper and no one thinks twice about it. It's the same thing, just for women."

Growing the cause

Since that first brunch, Girls Helping Girls. Period. has collected more than 50,000 individual tampons and sanitary napkins. Their original goal was to give a full year's supply of products to 100 women and girls by the end of 2015, and they surpassed it by having enough to donate to 150. Emma and Quinn are spending 2016 collecting products and fundraising toward a target of \$5,000, and they want girls around the country to take up the cause in their own neighborhoods. "Anyone can host a party or discuss the issue with friends," says Emma. "Simply talking about the problem is a big step in solving it."

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 Visit [girlshelpinggirlsperiod.org](http://girlshelpinggirlsperiod.org) to donate to Emma and Quinn's GoFundMe page and learn how to host your own party to help others near you.

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Go to [feedingamerica.org/womansday](http://feedingamerica.org/womansday) to donate and join our fight against hunger. Every \$1 provides 11 meals to people in need, helping them afford feminine hygiene products and other basic necessities.

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