

# LOCAL NEWS

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## Give cheeks a chance, send diapers

They're dirty, smelly, bulky and bad for the environment.

But a world without diapers? I can't even think about it.

A group of Bay Area moms has been thinking about it — not a world without diapers, exactly, but the plight of parents who can't afford them.

For those who can't shop in bulk, a month's worth of diapers can cost \$100.

But most food banks and shelters don't provide them and you can't buy them with food stamps.

As a result, low-income



**pattyfisher**

*in my opinion*

parents resort to reusing disposable diapers (gross) or letting their kids sit in dirty diapers all day (grosser).

"We even hear stories about women

taking the food they get at the food bank and selling it to get money for diapers," said Lisa Truong, an Oakland mother of two who is intimately familiar with diapers and diaper issues.

Her issue is not the politically correct cloth-vs.-disposable battle that raged when I was having babies.

I put up with diaper pin pricks, leaky wraps and smelly bins until my husband said he'd had it and refused to change another cloth diaper.

Secretly relieved, I switched to plastic.

Today's issue is a lot more basic: Low-income moms who can't afford either cloth or plastic.

## Donating online

To help those moms, Truong and her friend Rachel Fudge have created "Help A Mother Out," a Web site that educates people about the problem and makes it easy to donate diapers online.

They launched their "Give Cheeks a Chance" diaper drive in May and gathered 15,000 diapers for Bay Area aid agencies. They have since expanded to Southern California and dream of going nationwide.

"We're not going to stop talking about this until we get the public policy changed," Truong told me.

Because diapers aren't food, they aren't covered by food stamps or WIC, the federal infant nutrition program.

Truong can't quite believe the way the diaper issue has taken over her life.

It all began innocently enough in March when she was enjoying a few minutes of peace while her infant son napped.

Oprah was on TV talking about how the recession was hurting low-income moms.

## Driven to help

Suddenly she was consumed with the need to help. But with two sons, ages 3 years and 7 months, she had no time to volunteer. And with a family of four living on her husband's income as an architect, there wasn't a lot of money to donate to charity.

But she had a computer. And e-mail. And Facebook and Twitter.

She contacted several shelters and learned that the greatest need wasn't food or clothing, but diapers. "Give Cheeks a Chance" was born.

Donating is easy. Just go to [www.helpamotherout.org](http://www.helpamotherout.org), choose an organization such as Family Supportive Housing in San Jose, and click on a link to Amazon.com, where you can buy diapers and have them delivered. A package of 120-150 diapers costs about \$40.

Don't shop on line? Bring donations to Baby Buzz, 1314 Lincoln Ave. in Willow Glen.

Truong says you don't need a big trust fund to be a philanthropist.

"We're not money bags," she said. "We are just young families. We could lose our house, it could happen to anybody. But our kids are healthy and we have a roof over our heads and there are a lot of things to be thankful for."

If you can relate to that, Give Cheeks a Chance. The cheeks will thank you.

Contact Patty Fisher at [pfisher@mercurynews.com](mailto:pfisher@mercurynews.com) or 408-920-5852.