

## **GIVE GRACE, GIVE HOPE, Inc.**

On Jan. 9, 2018, Give Grace, Give Hope, Inc. was incorporated with a mission to eliminate the gap between need and access to menstrual products in our community. We do this by providing pads and tampons to Iowa schools, homeless shelters, and human service organizations.



Give Grace, Give Hope is one of almost 290 organizations registered who are working around the WORLD on menstrual health education, research, policy or innovation. At least 500 million women and girls are estimated to lack the means to manage their monthly periods, according to a 2015 report by UNICEF and the World Health Organization. Many drop out of school, miss days of class, or suffer infections, as a result.

Give Grace, Give Hope began with my participation in the West Des Moines Leadership Academy. During a poverty simulation and tour through West Des Moines Human Services, we learned about the need for simple (yet essential) items like personal care products. My youngest daughter, Brenlyn, who was 7 at the time was inspired by what we learned and wanted to help.

A short while later, Brenlyn was asked what she wanted for Christmas. “Pagina covers” was her answer. In her young mind, that’s what she was calling menstrual products. What began on social media as #operationpaginacovers evolved quickly into a non-profit to support this very worthy cause.

That first Christmas in 2017 took a unique turn for our family. Because of Brenlyn’s request, our Christmas tree was surrounded by pads and tampons. Additionally, more than \$2,000 was raised to purchase menstrual products. Brenlyn’s 8<sup>th</sup> birthday on January 5<sup>th</sup> was celebrated by delivering a truck full of menstrual products to organizations that help women in need.

Throughout the year, we partner with organizations and volunteers to prepare period packs for those in need in our community. Each pack contains four pads, four tampons, four liners, a bar of soap, and a positive note of encouragement.

In 2018 Give Grace, Give Hope served the following organizations:

- Iowa Homeless Youth Centers
- Johnston Community School District
- Harding Middle School, Des Moines
- Johnston Partnership
- Youth Emergency Shelter & Services (YESS)
- Home, Inc.
- Clive Community Foundation
- Broadlawns Medical Center