

## Demetra Presley finds inspiration in her volunteers

Demetra Presley's parents were committed to her getting a great education and a great job – missing school or work over something small wasn't an option. But, when she saw a Facebook video about a teacher making period supply packets for students, she couldn't get that out of her mind. Small things matter. "We have students who are missing out ... just because they don't have access to basic period supplies," she said.

She decided to run a drive to collect supplies through Facebook and a GoFundMe page. "As she delved deeper, learning and talking about #periodpoverty with parents and educators, Demetra realized that a nonprofit organization was needed in her community to keep the work ongoing.

Go With the Flow began making donations in 2017 and officially incorporated in January of 2018. With the help of 150 volunteers, the organization supplies packs of period products to more than 50 high-poverty schools from Phoenix to Tucson. By May of 2019, Go With the Flow had distributed 13,000 period packs.

Those 150 volunteers are essential to the organization's success, particularly since it does not have paid staff. Presley's day job is working as a probation officer. "My heart is in social services, giving back to the community and trying to help those that have a need," she said. "My job is what allows me to do this."

Working with Go With the Flow evokes mixed emotions for Presley. Learning about #periodpoverty focused her attention on larger issues of poverty and the struggles that so many students face. But the volunteers her. "It's definitely inspirational to be part of something that when people find out about it they want to do something," she said.

Joining the Alliance for Period Supplies has helped Go With the Flow to expand beyond schools. Presley used her first Alliance for Period Supplies donation of xx U by Kotex pads to begin getting supplies to unaccompanied minors in government custody and girls in the foster care system. The donation will also help Presley provide supplies to additional schools, particularly those with significant numbers of refugee students. She says the pads are often preferred by women and girls in refugee communities.

Presley is excited to be a part of the Alliance for Period Supplies. "It's been very helpful knowing that there are different organizations across the United States that are working on this issue and that none of us are alone," she said.

Presley is committed to collecting and distributing as many period supplies as she can: She'll meet you in a Target parking lot to pick up a bag of products; come to your living room to talk with your book club



about #periodpoverty; or get you to a fundraiser at the local roller derby. Ultimately, however, she realizes that policy needs to change. She's begun talking with legislators about reforms and advocating for all schools to provide access to free period products. "There are already allies that contributed to advocacy work," she said. "We can all learn from their success and seek to duplicate it. That will be crucial to long-term change."

The most surprising part of her work? Women frequently blame themselves for not knowing #periodpoverty exists in the U.S.

"How would you know when this is something we haven't talked about?" she tells them. "So, let's talk and let's #endperiodpoverty."

Go With the  
**Flow**

