

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Red Deer Public Schools will have Barrier-Free Access to Menstrual Products over the next Fifteen Months

Red Deer, Alberta –March 11, 2021 –The pilot project is an initiative of the Soroptimist International Central Alberta and part of the United Way Central Alberta’s “Period Promise” campaign to bring free tampons, pads, and dispensers to all washrooms at Lindsay Thurber Comprehensive High School, Eastview Middle School, Normandeau School, and G.H. Dawe School.

“Period Promise” will begin in the selected schools this March and run until June 2022. Supplies will be replenished by staff and United Way Central Alberta will track student and staff feedback, product use and dispenser condition.

“Students should never have to miss school, extracurricular, sports or social activities because they can’t afford or don’t have access to menstrual products,” said Nicole Buchanan, Board Chair for Red Deer Public Schools. “Equity is a priority for Red Deer Public Schools. By reducing barriers for students to these necessary products, our Division is making a real change in the lives of students.”

The project is estimated to cost \$27,000 which has been funded by a \$20,250 gender-equality grant from the Red Deer District Community Foundation and all additional costs funded by United Way Central Alberta. Product sponsorships have also been granted by HOSPECO’s Period Partner and Procter & Gamble, makers of Always and Tampax. Always has championed girls’ confidence for over 35+ years and is committed to help #EndPeriodPoverty to ensure that lack of access to menstrual products doesn’t hold young people back.

“Public awareness about period poverty and the inability to access menstrual hygiene products has ignited a movement calling for free and accessible pads and tampons in restrooms and public spaces around the world, including schools,” Sherri Smith, President of Soroptimist International of Central Alberta said. “The Period Promise is an initiative to gain commitment from schools, workplaces and various levels of government to provide free menstrual hygiene products in their facilities.”

In April 2019, the Government of British Columbia announced that all schools in the province would provide free menstrual products to students. This was the result of a United Way school pilot project with the New Westminster school division. The federal Liberal government is also committing to making menstrual products free in federally regulated workplaces.

United Way will conduct a public awareness campaign targeting the selected schools’ students and staff and will use a survey to gauge the effectiveness of the pilot project.

For more information: Brett Speight, CEO, United Way Central Alberta 403-309-3820 or Sherri Smith, President, Soroptimist International of Central Alberta 403-391-7912 | www.caunitedway.ca/periodpromise and UWLM Research Document <https://tinyurl.com/mf2metj5>

The Fund for Gender Equality is supported by a collaboration between Community Foundations of Canada and the Equality Fund, with support from the Government of Canada.

- 30 -

About United Way Central Alberta

United Way’s mission is to improve lives and build community through engagement and mobilized collective action. By investing in programs that get to the root causes of complex social issues, United Way is able to change people’s lives and lift them to new levels of possibility. All donations are invested by active community volunteers and directed into Central Alberta communities to create community impact. Established in 1965, United Way Central Alberta celebrated its 50 anniversary in 2015.

Soroptimist International of Central Alberta

Part of a global volunteer organization that provides women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment. When women and girls are educated, they have opportunity, choice and power to make healthy decisions for themselves and their families. Our vision is that women and girls have the resources and opportunities to reach their full potential and live their dreams. Through our Dreams programs, we have been helping women and girls in our community since 1988.

