**For Immediate Release**

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**Punta Gorda, FL**– One in three American moms struggle everyday to provide their babies with the basic essentials-the first and foremost-diapers. Providing diapers are so critical due to the fact that there is very little help or public resources that address this issue. For example, food assistance programs, like food stamps, focus solely on food and nutrition and do not cover diapers. There are no federal assistance programs that pay for or provide diapers. Not WIC, Food Stamps or Medicare. Non-profit organizations such as Charlotte County Healthy Start Coalition work with families and individuals in crisis and are constantly listing diapers as an ongoing and top priority.

An average infant uses up to 12 diapers per day, a toddler up to 8 per day. But in low income houses, a baby may be in a single diaper all day or longer. The cost of diapers for a young child can reach upwards of $100 per month, a stressful amount for vulnerable families living on the edge. Sometimes families have to choose between diapers and food or other essentials for their families.

From March 26th-April 13th, Charlotte Behavioral Health Care held the first ever Diaper Drive to benefit low-income families in the local Healthy Start program. “Our goal this year was to collect 1,000 diapers in this 2 week drive, we collected over 1,500”, says Jessica Boles, Director of Community Relations at CBHC. “The diapers go out as quickly as they come in and hopefully in the future we can create some year-long partnerships with local business and organizations to help us really make a difference.”

The diapers donated from the diaper drive benefitted the 261 moms in the Charlotte County Healthy Start Program and the 116 infants currently still in diapers. The Charlotte County Healthy Start Coalition is a collaborative effort of Doctors, nurses and other area health care professionals that join together to evaluate each pregnancy to help expectant moms have healthier babies, reduce infant mortality and improve the overall health and development of Charlotte County children. Each mom-to-be and newborn is screened to determine the types of services they might need for baby’s HEALTHY START in life.

For more information on the diaper drive or partnership, please call Jessica K. Boles, Director of Community Relations, Charlotte Behavioral Health Care at 941-639-8300 ext. 275.

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