

Madison Central joins the movement for free feminine products

Adya Praveen
CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Madison Central High School has recently made a historic stride for the purpose of gender equality by providing feminine products in school bathrooms for students to use free of charge. The dispensers filled with pads and tampons greatly benefit more than half of the school's population by alleviating both the stress and secrecy encompassing menstrual cycles. Although menstruation is a typically mundane event as it affects women every month, the discussion of menstrual talk is often considered "taboo" in society today. These cultural expectations are too often inflicted on women and children at a young age, forcing these individuals to maintain the silence about periods in order to conform to societal norms. Emily Adcock (12) said, "Whether that was slipping a pad into a jacket or asking very adamantly to use the restroom but never specifying why, young people

are taught that periods are something taboo". However, providing feminine products in public settings to faculty and students instill comfort and protection for their needs. It helps ease restrictions on communication and create a safe space for all students.

The placement of these products in the restrooms not only increases comfort and support for students, but also provide significant aid for those with financial restraints. In present-day society, half the population is financially burdened merely due to their gender. Many young girls do not have easy accessibility to stores that house feminine products due to transportation and familial issues. Not only is accessibility a major issue, but also the inherent prices of these products. Feminine products are a necessity, not a luxury. However, the high prices of these basic products can create a barrier for many young girls. "Having access to free tampons and pads in the bathrooms eliminates financial restrictions and gives girls the privacy and accessibility they deserve in this school." Sneha Cherukuri (12) said. By placing feminine prod-

ucts in an environment that is visited by these girls daily, "period poverty", a term coined to describe the lack of access to sanitary products, is reduced severely.

In order to maintain the continuance of free feminine products, several students in the Women Empowerment Club (WEC) have been lobbying for sign-ups to keep the bathrooms stocked. Sneha Cherukuri, the president and founder of WEC, said, "This takes the pressure off the staff and gives us the ability to make sure the products are always available". Members of the WEC would sign up either weekly or bi-weekly to maintain the financial and emotional comfort for their fellow students. As of right now there are only two product dispensers in the school restrooms, but students are actively thinking of ways to incorporate this idea for the remaining three.

As the movement spreads

across the country, many colleges and high schools join the fight for freely accessible tampons and pads in restrooms outside of the home. "Currently only five states have laws requiring public schools to provide free menstrual products", said Teeda Phan (11). However, as increasingly more schools join the movement, state lawmakers are pushed to consider legislation that would provide all students this privilege. Madison Central providing free feminine products for its population is not only a huge victory for women at the school, but also a victory for women nationwide.

