



GUNN HIGH SCHOOL SOCIAL JUSTICE PATHWAY PROJECT

STOPPING THE STIGMA PERIOD.

Presentation by Lauren Murakami





BUT FIRST...

LET'S DEFINE TERMS

PERIOD POVERTY

- lack of **access** to menstrual products
- lack of **education** about menstruation in general

THE TAMPON TAX

- an **additional sales tax** on menstrual products
- menstrual products seen as “**luxury items**”

PINK TAX

- **women's** products and services tend to be priced **higher than men's**
 - **financial burden** on women
- 
- 

THE NEED

AWARENESS

- **EDUCATION:** teach people about the negative impact on menstruators
- **REDUCING THE STIGMA:** bring exposure to the topic of menstruation

HIGH PERIOD PRODUCT PRICES

- **INEQUITY:** disadvantaged communities deal with poverty → must face expensive period products too
- **HEALTH ISSUES:** using unsafe materials → infections
- **DISCOMFORT:** dealing with a period is difficult as is even with proper products

2019: *46% of menstruators said they had to **sacrifice buying food** for their families than buying **pads for themselves.***

JAYDEN DAVIS
FROM THE PERIOD PROJECT

*explains that it is such an overlooked issue due to the “**disgust**” around it and especially “**men’s lack of comfort with periods because they don’t understand [them]**”.*

THE PROJECT BREAKDOWN

1

EDUCATION & AWARENESS:
INFOGRAPHIC FLIERS AROUND CAMPUS

2

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:
AMAZON WISHLIST PRODUCT DRIVE

3

HANDS-ON STUDENT ACTIVITY:
MENSTRUAL PRODUCT PACKING EVENTS

4

SERVING LOCALS IN NEED:
DONATING THE KITS TO WEHOPE

THE PROJECT PROCESS

MY VISION

- start **talking** about periods (EX: SexED)
- **help those who struggle** to afford products
- shine a light on an **overlooked** women's issue

ALLIES

- **YCS High School**
Coordinators: Aubrey Parke & Helena Cirne
- Stephanie Prescott
@The Ladybug Program
- Jayden Davis
@The Period Project
- Zac Clark
@The HomeMore Project
- Sterling Larnerd
hosts period product drives

VICTORIES

APRIL 2, 2025:
ASSEMBLED 50 KITS
@WELLNESS CENTER
EVENT

APRIL 17, 2025:
PRODUCTS ON
AMAZON WISHLIST
SOLD OUT

APRIL 21, 2025:
ASSEMBLED 100 KITS
@YCS EVENT

PROJECT OBSTACLES

- hard to get **experts** from **bigger organizations** to respond

- was difficult during the **interview process** & when seeking **feedback** from organizations

COMMUNICATION W/ EXPERTS

GETTING DONATIONS

- difficult to get product drive **started** → hard to get people to give money to a **student project**
- donations would come in **waves** for every **new push of outreach**
- **harder** to get donations than I thought

OUTREACH METHODS:

- PTAC & PTA eNews
- School Announcements
- Social Media Publicity
- School Board & City Council members
- Parent Square & Nextdoor
- Other YCS networks
- Posters around Gunn

STOPPING THE STIGMA PERIOD.

Period Poverty and the Tampon Tax are constantly present in daily society, often going completely unnoticed.

64% of menstruators noted that they struggled to afford menstrual products one year.

2019 Study by Ballard Brief



WHAT IS PERIOD POVERTY?

- the lack of access to menstrual products due to low income
- the lack of education about menstruation in general

WHAT IS THE TAMPON TAX?

- an additional sales tax on menstrual products
- menstrual products are seen as luxury items

As of December 2024, **20 states** in the U.S. still enforce the Tampon Tax. WHY?

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE? WHAT IS THE IMPACT?

- **HEALTH ISSUES:** using unsafe materials (rags, paper) → infections
- **STIGMA:** inability to access products → shame, embarrassment
- **INEQUITY:** disadvantaged communities deal with poverty already, must face expensive period products too
- **GENDER DISCRIMINATION:** products specifically for menstruators are being sold at outrageous prices



"Toilet paper and paper towels are supplied in bathrooms, so should female hygiene."

-Laura Rathbone, activist



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- carry extra pads & tampons in your bag to help others
- discuss menstruation more
- donate money or unused products to organizations (The Pad Project, Helping Women Period, Period.org)

SPEAK UP. DISCUSS IT. BRING IT UP. RAISE AWARENESS.
START CONVERSATIONS ABOUT MENSTRUATION.

Using your **voice** is always the **first step** towards a solution.

Sponsored by the AAR Social Justice Pathway class.

WANT TO HELP FIGHT PERIOD POVERTY?

GET INVOLVED @GUNN

ASSEMBLE MENSTRUAL PRODUCT KITS!

- Wellness Center PRIME event on **Wednesday, April 2nd**
- YCS event @lunch in room N-115 on **Monday, April 21st**
- Kits will be donated to WeHOPE, a homelessness non-profit in East Palo Alto



Use the Amazon Wishlist in the QR code below to help provide items for this community service activity!

**Items are delivered directly to the YCS Center on campus.*

Items to purchase:

- pads & tampons
- feminine wipes
- period pouches
- kit bags



Link: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08N5K9N9X>
Any donation helps!

Even purchasing **1 PACK** of pads will help someone who has trouble affording products on the daily.

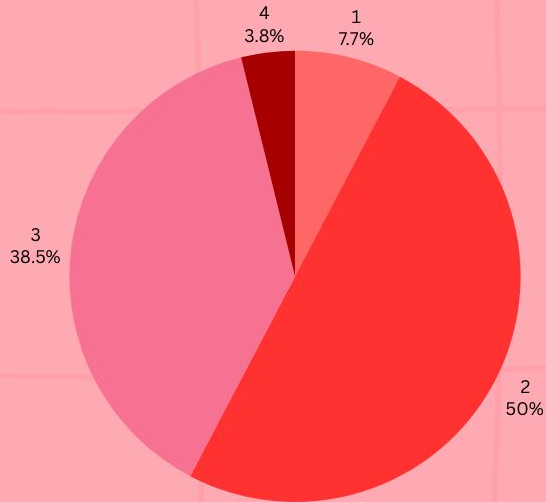
Sponsored by the AAR Social Justice Pathway class.

Contact stoppingthestigmaperiod@gmail.com with any questions.

FLIER PROTOTYPE

BEFORE

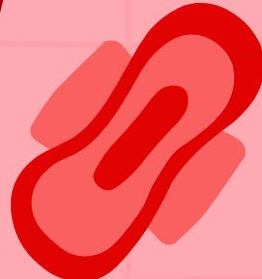
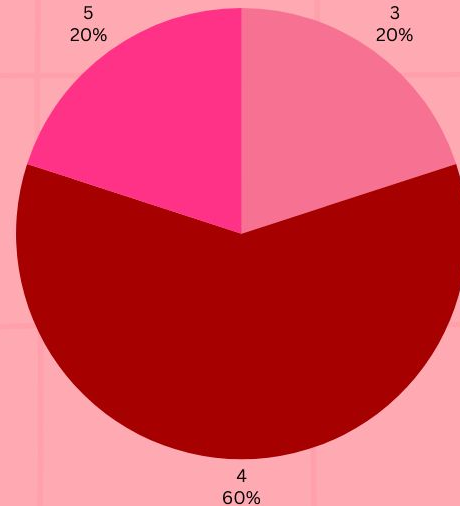
On a scale of 1-5, how much do you know about the issue of Period Poverty?



After reading,
95%
of interviewees
said they were
more informed
about the issue.

AFTER

On a scale of 1-5, how much do you know about the issue of Period Poverty?



DONATIONS RECIEVED

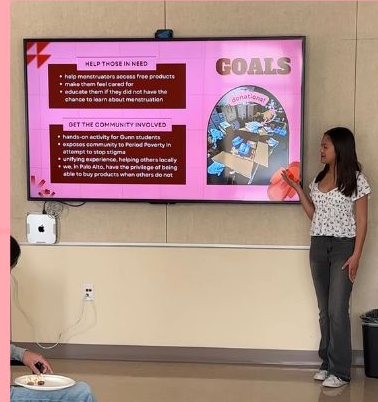
TOTAL OF
196
DONATIONS!



~\$2,000
WORTH OF
DONATIONS
RAISED!

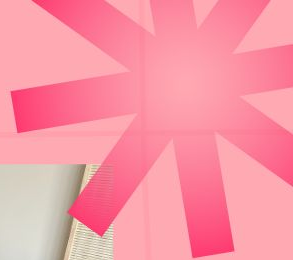
WELLNESS CENTER EVENT

TOTAL OF
50
KITS!

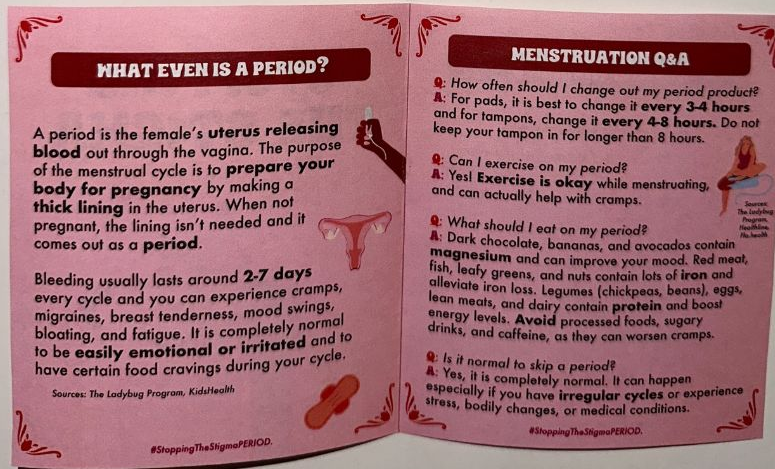
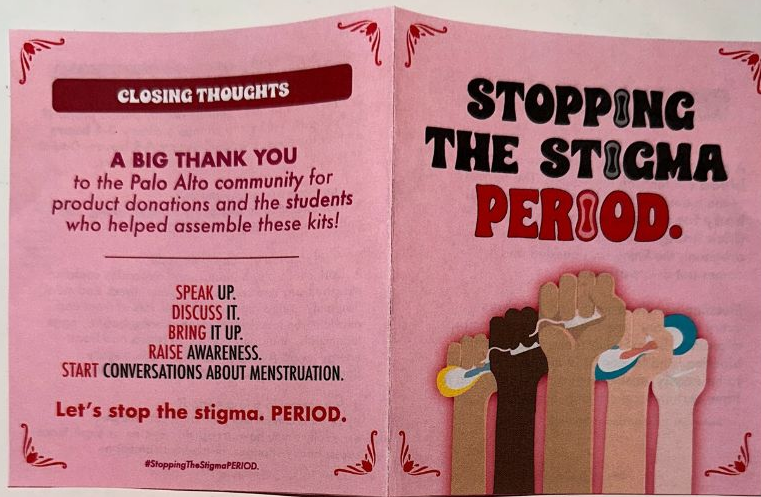


W

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TOTAL OF
50
KITS!



YCS CLUB EVENT



TOTAL OF
100
KITS!



THE RESULTS

STOPPED THE STIGMA

- **TOPIC OF MENSTRUATION:** showing others that it should not be taboo in public
- **THE ISSUE:** bring exposure to the topic of menstruation

HELPED THOSE IN NEED

- **WEHOPE, EAST PALO ALTO:** distributed 150+ kits to homeless menstruators in need
- **THE HOMEMORE PROJECT, SAN FRANCISCO:** donated all extra pads and tampons that were not packed in kits

INSPIRED A TEACHER: starting to store free menstrual products in his classroom because he saw my posters around campus & felt inspired

THE FLIER

*I think a lot of text is okay if the **design is good**. The design is very **eye-catching**. I think that a lot of people will look at the **pad as the 'I' in period**."*

*"I **love the visuals** you included as well as the **small bar graph** at the top. It really **interests viewers** and makes you want to continue reading."*

THE EVENTS

*"I think it's **really cool** that you're doing this project! I saw your **posters around campus** and wanted to come **support** the cause and I'm also really **passionate** about [**fighting Period Poverty**]."*

*"I really like the **trick-or-treat system** you did the product distribution in– it was so **fun** and **efficient**. The activity was super **meaningful and well planned**."*

TAKEAWAYS & NEXT STEPS

WHAT I LEARNED

1. **Your voice is your biggest tool:** cannot give up, must continue to reach out & speak up despite discouragement
2. **Have sympathy for small community project or fundraisers:** take time to pay attention to appreciate & recognize their efforts
3. **Problem-solving while being professional:** learned to stay calm + fix it
4. **You have more support than you think:** did not expect such positive and encouraging feedback from so many peers

NEXT STEPS

1. **MYSELF:** continue advocacy for Period Poverty, donate to organizations → talk about menstruation openly
2. **COMMUNITY:** start talking more about periods, spread the word, educate others → make it a social issue that is commonly thought about
3. **COMMUNITY:** have more sympathy even if Period Poverty does not directly affect you

MY CALL TO ACTION

**PUT YOURSELF OUT THERE.
TAKE RISKS IN ADVOCACY.
IF YOU FEEL STRONGLY
ABOUT SOMETHING, DO
SOMETHING ABOUT IT,
REGARDLESS OF WHAT
OTHERS THINK.**

→ USING YOUR VOICE IS ALWAYS THE
FIRST STEP TOWARDS A SOLUTION.
IT'S REWARDING IN THE END.





THANK YOU

**TO THE FOOTHILL SYMPOSIUM
AND THE PAUSED AAR PROGRAM**

**FOR GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE A PROJECT SO IMPORTANT
TO ME AND TO EXPERIENCE MAKING CHANGE IN THE COMMUNITY!**

THANK YOU

**TO GUNN YCS MENTORS:
AUBREY PARK & HELENA CIRNE**

**FOR SUPPORTING ME & MY PROJECT EVERY STEP OF THE
WAY, TROUBLESHOOTING WITH ME, AND OFFERING ADVICE!**

AND HUGE THANK YOU

**TO MY TEACHER, TARA FIRENZI,
FOR CONSTANTLY ENCOURAGING ME, HELPING ME DEVELOP
MY PROJECT, AND BEING OPEN-MINDED TO MY IDEAS!**



SOURCES & RESOURCES

SOURCES

Clark, Zac. Personal interview. 9 October 2024.

Davis, Jayden. Personal interview. 11 October 2024.

Larnerd, Sterling. Personal interview. 16 October 2024.

"Period Poverty in the United States." *Ballard Brief*, Brigham Young University, <https://ballardbrief.byu.edu/issue-briefs/period-poverty-in-the-united-states#:~:text=Practices-,Menstrual%20Equity%20Law,other%20important%20aspects%20of%20menstruation>. Accessed 13 Sept. 2024.

"Period Poverty: A Neglected Public Health Issue." *National Institutes of Health*, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>. Accessed 18 Sept. 2024.

Prescott, Stephanie. Personal interview. 18 October 2024.

RESOURCES

WANT TO DONATE OR LEARN MORE?

- **PERIOD:** Period.org
- **THE PERIOD PROJECT:**
periodproject.org
- **HELPING WOMEN PERIOD:**
helpingwomenperiod.org
- **ALLIANCE FOR PERIOD SUPPLIES:**
allianceforperiodsupplies.org
- **DAYS FOR GIRLS INTERNATIONAL:**
daysforgirls.org
- **THE PERIOD PANTRY:**
theperiodpantryproject.org

ANY QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, CONCERNS?
Contact: stoppingthestigmaperiod@gmail.com