

## Rally for PERIOD's first National Period Day



This is a packing party that helps to build period packs, which should cover the duration of one menstrual cycle. The period packs will be sent to a drop-off location in Spokane later this month.

The Washington State University PERIOD chapter will be in Seattle, Washington, on Oct. 19 for the National Period Day rally. The rally will focus on raising awareness of the issue of period poverty and demanding change, federally, to making period products more accessible.

PERIOD is a global nonprofit youth-powered organization founded by Nadya Okamoto, a social entrepreneur and activist, in 2014. There are more than 450 campus chapters in all 50 states and over 30 countries. WSU's PERIOD chapter has 14 members. Period poverty is the lack of access to sanitary products and menstrual hygiene education.

WSU's chapter president and founder Aydan Garland-Miner has been planning the rally since June, with the help of five other chapter leaders from around the state. It's been chosen as one of the top 10 rallies in the U.S. for National Period Day by Seventh Generation, a company that creates plant-based products for the home. There are 55 confirmed rallies for National Period Day.

"The founding of the PERIOD chapter at WSU is historic for the Pullman Campus," said Marian Sciachitano, adviser of WSU PERIOD and professor of women's studies.

These are some of PERIOD's first-ever rallies and people are enthusiastic about them. Alexa Branch, vice president of the WSU PERIOD Chapter, said this will be an opportunity to bring people together who want to end the stigma behind menstruation and period poverty. The publicity for the rally will allow conversation about menstruation to start

"That's what I'm the most excited about. We're finally talking about it and we're not talking quietly," Branch said.

Having conversations about menstruation is difficult and considered taboo. This stems from the shame that menstruators are taught, Garland-Miner said. One of the main goals of the chapter members is to open discussions about menstruation, and they do that by advocating, educating and serving the public. The only way to eliminate period stigma is to normalize menstruation and that begins by talking about it Garland-Miner said.

Sciachitano said the group hopes that discussion around menstruation will grow on Oct. 19 as chapters from the Pacific Northwest and across the United States stand together and raise regional and national awareness about period poverty and period equality. It will take place 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Cal Anderson Park.

At the rally there will be people speaking and a packing party. A packing party is an event to assemble period packs, which consist of nine tampons and six pads. PERIOD’s website says that the rally will help raise awareness and give a voice to the one in five low income women, living in big cities in the United States, who don’t have access to proper menstrual products.

The demonstration will call attention to the Washington tampon tax. Washington is one of 35 states that has a sales tax on menstrual products. The rally will discuss how unjust and discriminatory the tax is. PERIOD’s website shared that unlike most poverty-related issues, this one is solvable.

The WSU PERIOD chapter will do its first distribution trip to Spokane, host a product drive and packing party, and screen the documentary “Period. End of Sentence.” later this month.

“Not only is it a fight for a [rally] for menstruators, but also a [rally] for gender equality” Garland-Miner said.

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