

Kaili Keefe

### **Young woman makes a difference in Pullman through activism**

There's clouds overhead and it's downpouring in Seattle, Washington during lunchtime. It's cold, wet, and everyone is getting soaked standing outside Cal Anderson Park. People gathering in the park come fitted with armor of rain jackets, an umbrella and big smiles.

It's October 19 and Aydan Garland-Miner has been waiting for this day for four months now. She's been coordinating the National Period Day Rally to help raise awareness for period poverty, the lack of access to sanitary products and menstrual hygiene education. Garland-Miner puts the final touches on her speech and steps out of the car to see this surreal moment come to life.

Although the weather wasn't ideal, the energy was high with around 100 people passionately assembled in the park to help make period products more accessible for all.

Garland-Miner is a junior in college studying broadcast production with a minor in women's studies. She has light blonde curly hair that she wears tied back and bangs that cover her forehead. She is passionate about activism, saying "both my parents in their jobs serve other people, that's why I'm so drawn to service work," Her father is a general contractor and her mother is a recently retired lawyer of family dependencies of her own law firm. Growing up in Bow, Washington as an only child Garland-Miner spent a lot of her time in Bellingham, Washington playing tennis, practicing dance and visiting her grandfather. Much of her upbringing was spent reading. Her father expressed how important literature was for learning and as an escape said Garland-Miner. "He instilled the value of education in me," said Garland-Miner and her mother taught her empathy.

After meeting on an app for new students at Washington State University, Garland-Miner's best friend, Zoe Conger, says "from the beginning I got that she was kind of an anxious person, but when I met her in person for the first time she was so bubbly and I could tell she was a really good person." Garland-Miner likes to ask people questions and is genuinely interested said Conger. Likewise, Garland-Miner's other best friend Kiera Clubb says that "she's a wonderful listener and has such a calming way about her."

Behind Garland-Miner's Clubmaster frames are bright blue eyes, untouched with makeup. She has a welcoming smile and fair skin. Garland-Miner is "an enthusiastic student and organizer," said Marian Sciachitano, advisor of WSU PERIOD and professor of women's studies. Garland-Miner has made a difference on the WSU campus and Pullman community with her commitment to helping period poverty. "She doesn't just talk the talk, but walks the walk," said Sciachitano.

While Garland-Miner is bold and not one to hide behind problems, she's had to overcome personal obstacles. Having dealt with anxiety, Garland-Miner shares an analogy, it is better to float than to flail and panic, "[your situation] will still be uncomfortable, but your discomfort will lessen if you choose to float." Her mantra for life is that acceptance, purpose and love are the key to contentment, acknowledging that she's in a position of privilege to say this.

Throughout the process of setting up the NPD Rally everyone looked to Garland-Miner for guidance, she said. After arriving at the rally the PERIOD chapter, volunteers, speakers and demonstrators turned to her too said Garland-Miner. Garland-Miner says this was overwhelming but in a good way.

Chants of "period poverty has to go" ring throughout Cal Anderson Park. 5-year-olds are holding signs and 60-year-olds are at the rally too. People gather around the tents, shoes are

damp and muddied but the passion was still very high said Clubb. After a moment of panic from power not turning on, Garland-Miner gives her speech. “She wasn’t afraid to speak her mind and share very personal experiences,” said Clubb. Garland-Miner is unsure of her future but hopes to continue her education with aspirations to get her doctorate degree and continue her work in activism.

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