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## NEWS

# Pro-Palestine 'Community Care Day' protest defies Cannon Green site ban, U. turns a blind eye



About 60 protesters entered Cannon Green during a Charlie Brown screening on Community Care Day..

Sophie Brissett / The Daily Princetonian

**Sophie Brissett** and **Isabella Dail**

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Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) organized a rally on Cannon Green to disrupt the second annual Community Care Day (CCD), a day that promotes well-being on campus, on Friday.

Around 60 protesters gathered in East Pyne Courtyard at 5 p.m. before moving to Cannon Green — an area of campus where organized protest is now explicitly prohibited. Despite new signage this semester on Cannon Green that reads, “This space is reserved for officially sanctioned University events and may not be used for other organized activities without permission,” the demonstration was able to continue as planned.

“Thank you all for coming to our disruption of Community Care Day, which is glossing over the fact that there is no mental health while your school is invested in genocide,” one speaker said. Protesters distributed signs with messages such as “Princeton divest from genocide” and “Please be advised Princeton is funding genocide.”

Several prominent University administrators were present at the scene when the protest erupted, including University President Christopher Eisgruber '83, Assistant Vice President for Public Safety Kenneth Strother, and Vice President for Communication, and Government Affairs Gadi Dechter.

CCD, hosted by The Office of the Vice President for Campus Life, offers a “range of fun and relaxing activities throughout the day” including yoga, lawn games, and watercolor painting. The activities lasted from 8 a.m. through 7 p.m.

The Friday rally fell during SJP's “Week of Rage” from Oct. 21 to Oct. 27. They held events throughout the week, including a student Palestine advocacy panel on Oct. 23 and a Women of the Global Indigenous panel hosted by Natives at Princeton on Oct. 21. On Friday, SJP held Jumu'ah — a Friday communal prayer service — for Gaza ahead of the rally.

After gathering by East Pyne, the protesters then moved to Cannon Green, where the culminating event of CCD, called “Community Gathering,” was taking place. Over 100 students gathered in line at food trucks from local vendors like Jammin' Crepes and Nomad Pizza while “It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown” played on a screen mounted on the lawn. President Christopher Eisgruber '83 was present for parts of the event.

While on the lawn, protestors recited chants like “Community care means our camp on Cannon Green,” “If you care about mental health, don't fund bombs with your wealth,” and “Cannon Green is where we stand, divestment is our demand.”

The event's DJ, set up in one corner of the lawn, raised the volume of the music higher in response, making it impossible to hear the chanting. Most bystanders ignored the protest, staying in line for food and continuing to watch the Charlie Brown movie on display. Some protesters tried to overcome the noise with megaphones, while others banged makeshift drums made of plastic buckets. The Daily Princetonian observed minimal presence from Public Safety (PSAFE) around the lawn. At one point, protesters briefly sat on the lawn and continued their chants.

Onlooking student Hari Iyer GS shared with the ‘Prince’ that he supported the right of the protestors to gather there. “I think protesting is great, and I think activism is a very important part of civic life,” he said.

A non-student bystander who identified himself as a Princeton community member, Tony Smith, echoed this sentiment telling the ‘Prince,’ “I am disappointed in the administration because this is supposed to be about community care and mental health and wellbeing, and it is one hundred percent ignorant and disrespectful and

disgraceful and annoying that for so long people have been asking the University — not just for the past year but for over a decade — to not give money to people who are killing children.”

The protesters then moved in front of Nassau Hall, where they were joined by more PSAFE officers, as well as free speech coordinators and several members of the University administration. At one point, University staff members intervened in an argument between a pro-Israel community member and multiple protesters.



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This rally is at least the third pro-Palestine rally held in Princeton this semester. These rallies, smaller than those related to the “Gaza Solidarity Encampment” this past spring, have generally continued uninterrupted despite the tightening of protest [regulations](#) this fall.

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