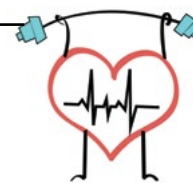


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Changing the Flow in Waterloo

Melissa Gatti
Editorial Assistant

Food and period products – both are essential, and yet many must choose between them.

However, thanks to social enterprise Changing the Flow and their new summer project #PeriodPreparedWR, in partnership with Nutrition for Learning, students in the Waterloo Region don't have to choose.

"Period poverty is real in Canada and around the world. I think people forget that it is a local issue as well," Kate Elliott, co-founder and Director of Operations at Changing the Flow, and proud University of Waterloo alumnus, said.

Changing the Flow, a social enterprise looking to achieve menstrual equity through education, awareness and implementation, is partnering with Nutrition for Learning to distribute free period packs to schools in the Waterloo Region at Nutrition for Learning's Pop Up Snack locations.

"The economic impact of COVID-19 is so large right now. These are essential items, but if you have to choose between period products and food, although they are both essential, food will win," Elliott said.

The free period packs contain

five pads, five tampons, and instructions for those using the products for the first time.

"We're handing out more than 100 packs a week to students in the Waterloo Region community, so there's clearly a need," Kevin Hiebert, co-founder and Director of Business Development at Changing the Flow, said.

The response from the commu-

nity has been tremendous, further proving just how necessary the packs, and work of the organization, are to the community.

"We've had fantastic feedback," Elliott said. "If it's parents picking up the packs, they're always really excited to take them home."

Kate Elliott shares that her experience at the University of Waterloo, in the Public Issues An-

thropology MA program, has impacted and inspired her work towards menstrual equity.

"UW has an amazing entrepreneurial mindset, and it's amazing to be in an environment that encourages making an impact," Elliott said.

"I realized how much support there was from the folks from Velocity, Concept, within my

program, and W³ [A social and support network among women and non-binary members of the UW community]. If you want to do something, the resources are there."

There are many ways to get involved and contribute to this initiative. To donate directly to #PeriodPreparedWR, visit their GoFundMe with 100% of proceeds going directly towards the program.

If you are unable to donate through the site, but would still like to help, whether outside or within the Waterloo region, donating period products to a local food bank can help people who menstruate access essential products.

To follow Changing the Flow and their work throughout the community, check them out on Instagram @changingtheflow, Facebook @changingtheflowcanada, or Twitter @changingtheflow.

Kate and Kevin both agree that the greatest way we can all do our part in striving for menstrual equity in our own communities begins with simply talking about it.

"It's about destigmatising menstruation, and that starts in changing conversations," Hiebert said.

As we are all faced with new struggles amidst these unprecedented times, where to get your next period products should not be one of them.

Period poverty is real in Canada and around the world. I think people forget that it is a local issue as well.

KATE ELLIOTT, CO-FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS AT CHANGING THE FLOW, UW ALUMNUS

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