



Project For
Alexander Capelluto Award

THE BLOOM BOX INITIATIVE

by Jiwan Kim

Addressing period poverty and health and
environmental concerns of feminine hygiene products
through first-hand connections.



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INTRODUCTION

Based on the previous interview, the main problem of the Pads4Change project was the scope of the impact. On the other hand, the issues it attempted to solve, such as period poverty and the health and environmental connotations of the feminine hygiene product industry, remain the key issues I aim to target in my new project. While the QR codes and the free reusable pad initiative was theoretically effective in raising awareness of those issues, it did not seem to have enough impact on the target audience. Therefore, I've reevaluated the values that the Pads4Change project was built upon, and created something that might have more of a direct connection to the problem and the people I want to help.

Therefore, with the issues I aim to solve and the question of impact in mind, I've decided to create a new initiative that directly bridges the gap that I had in my previous project while using Nadya Okamata's mission and impact as an inspiration for Bloom Box. Nadya Okamata has fought to destigmatize periods and end period poverty through her non-profit, Period, something quite similar to what I've done through my non-profit, MyTwoCents. After her non-profit work, Okamata created alluring and confidence-inducing feminine hygiene products, so that she was able to address the issues in a young woman's menstrual life. Therefore, inspired by her ventures, I've decided to take pieces of her work and combine them with my passion for solving period poverty and the health and environmental issues within the feminine hygiene industry.

THE PROJECT

What is a Bloom Box?

A Bloom Box is a carefully curated box of feminine hygiene products that encourages period power, is mindful of environmental issues, and addresses period poverty. Once produced, Bloom Boxes will be donated directly to women's shelters around New Jersey and New York City.

What is in a Bloom Box?

The bloom box initiative is made up of two steps. The first step is curating a box of feminine hygiene products that encourage period power and is mindful of the health and environmental issues I've addressed before.

- Sparkle eco-friendly disposable pads
 - An interesting idea that was brought up in our most recent interview was possibly incorporating eco-friendly disposable pads into the initiative. After doing some research, I discovered Sparkle, a feminine hygiene company that makes disposable pads out of banana fiber.
 - Sparkle began as a way to create high-performing feminine hygiene products that simultaneously did not harm the environment. By replacing the usual mass-produced petro-chemical based plastic within disposable pads with plant-based materials, Sparkle created an innovative product that both kept women comfortable and decreased the feminine hygiene industry's impact on the environment.
- DeoDoc Organic tampons
 - These tampons are another option for women to use when thinking about sustainable and healthier ways to deal with their menstrual cycles. DeoDoc uses organic cotton in the tampon and cardboard in the applicator, ensuring sustainability within their products.



The products also avoid any dyes, chemicals, plastics, pesticides, fertilizers, or herbicides (health concerns that I brought up in my first application).

- Period underwear
 - Period underwear is a great alternative to the reusable menstrual pads I had as the focus in my previous project. While being environmentally conscious and avoiding any health concerns that come with usual disposable pads or tampons, period underwear also maintains the convenience that women desire during their menstrual cycles.
- Instruction manuals for each feminine hygiene product
 - Each of the three products in the Bloom Box will have an instruction manual so that women who might be new to the product will understand how to use them. With the target women in mind, there will be carefully written instructions on how to use, wash, clean, or discard the products in the case of difficult living situations. There will also be specifications on what brand the products are coming from, the brand's mission, and the materials that the product is made out of. By explaining each of the components of the products, women will be able to utilize the Bloom Box while being aware of the health benefits to both their bodies and the environment. These manuals will also include alluring visuals that take the fear, discomfort, and stigma that is usually associated with menstrual cycles away.
- Educational booklet on the issues of period poverty, health concerns, and environmental considerations
 - An education booklet will be placed inside the Bloom Box that emphasizes the concerns that inspired the initiative. By bringing attention to period poverty and health risk and environmental connotations of certain feminine hygiene products, women are able to understand what the Bloom Box aims to do and why the products within the box are different from others. A QR code will also be included in the booklet as well as the box itself that is linked to a website where women can learn more about the issues addressed in the booklet.

Where would these Bloom Boxes go?

The second step of the Bloom Box initiative is the delivery of the boxes to women's shelters in the New Jersey and New York area.

- Once produced, these specially curated boxes will be hand delivered to women's shelters to create direct connections to those in need in my community.
- MyTwoCents have already made an impact by directly donating to those in our community, either in Fort Lee, Palisades Park, or Cliffside Park. Therefore, I already have in mind numerous areas, churches, and shelters that would appreciate the Bloom Boxes.

- For instance, Covenant House is a non-profit organization that offers housing and holistic care of homeless people around the world. MyTwoCents have had an interest to collaborate or help out the Covenant House locations in New Jersey and New York for a long period of time. In New Jersey and New York alone, Covenant House has 7 locations, all areas that the Bloom Box initiative can reach out to.
- Furthermore, if this project has a chance to progress, the Covenant House in New York would be the first women's shelter to receive my carefully curated Bloom Boxes.

How do you know Bloom Box is going to make an impact?

The main issue brought up in the previous interview was the scope of the impact of my project. I believe that the Bloom Box completely erases this issue, because the boxes are physical options for women who don't have access to feminine products. I have had countless experiences donating to people in need through my non-profit, MyTwoCents. Our specialty has become curated gift bags for shelters and churches. For instance, in the winter, we donated gift bags that include winter hats, hoodies, gloves, extra socks, tissues, and hand-written letters to those in need near the Palisade Park area. We hand delivered the gift bags to these people, having meaningful conversations and building fulfilling connections to those in our community. The turn out was amazing, emphasizing how much the community valued the curated gift bags. The Bloom Box is an elevated focused version of the gift bags I've organized in the past. It offers women physical products they need during their menstrual cycles, but it also educates and raises awareness on issues they might have not been aware of during their time of need. Furthermore, Bloom Boxes keeps the awareness aspect of my previous project alive in the instruction manuals and education booklets and simultaneously offer women physical products to use without sacrificing convenience, time, or confidence. Therefore, with the success of the gift bags and the impact I've been able to see first-hand, I believe that delivering Bloom Boxes to women's shelters will allow women to experience their menstruation in a new way: positively, educationally, and powerfully.

MyTwoCents Gift Bag Donation in Palisades Park 2024



How much is it going to cost?

- Bloom Box Packaging (\$3/box) - \$300 for 100 boxes
- DeoDoc Organic Tampons (\$9.00/Pack of 16 tampons) - \$900 for 1600 tampons
- Sparkle Plant-Based Ultra Pads (\$5.80/Pack of 10 pads) - \$530 for 1000 pads
- Period Underwear (\$15/Pack of 3 pads) - \$550 for 100 underwear
- Instruction Manuals - \$90 for 100 manuals
- Educational Booklet - \$90 for 100 booklets
- **Total Costs: \$2,460**

- **Bloom Box Breakdown**
 - Bloom Box Packaging (\$3)
 - One Pack of DeoDoc Organic Tampons (\$9)
 - One pack of Sparkle Plant-Based Ultra Pads (\$5.80)
 - One pair of period underwear (\$5)
 - One instruction manuals for three products (\$1.10)
 - One educational booklet (\$1.10)
 - **Each Bloom Box Costs: \$25**