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BREANNA

Shout Out to Brooke and Breanna for winning the 2021 Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes, an honor given to just 25 people making a positive change in the world.



BROOKE

BROOKE & BREANNA BENNETT

By Andréa Butler

The whispers of girls. A gesture toward the bottom drawer of a filing cabinet. The discreet retrieval and immediate hiding of a sanitary pad or tampon in a pocket or backpack.

It was a cycle 15-year-old twins Brooke and Breanna Bennett began witnessing at the age

of 3 while hanging out in their mother's office before and after school. First in Dubai, where their mom was an admissions director at an American school for girls and again years later in Miami, where their mom worked at a college preparatory school for girls.

By the time they turned 12, Brooke and Breanna, now living in Alabama, were determined to do something. "We explored several complex, global ideas, and then, we came up with tackling period poverty," says Brooke. "Turns out, the fight for menstrual equity is also a complex, global issue. We started Women in Training to address period poverty."

A certified nonprofit, Women in Training's (WIT) goal is to "End poverty. Period."

The duo learned quickly though that period poverty (aka a lack of access to menstrual-related supplies and education) is an effect of generational poverty, so to dismantle one problem, they had to tackle the other, too. And ya' girls are on it. Their ongoing WITKITS Campaign — which packs canvas bags full of menstrual, hygiene, and dental products, as well as masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer — sends monthly donations to at-risk and low-income girls, women, and transgender and nonbinary people in schools, homeless shelters, runaway teen shelters, foster care facilities, and programs for imprisoned women and their children, just to name a few. So far, they've given out more than 15,000 of these kits.

"One in four American girls, transgender men, and nonbinary individuals use socks, toilet paper, and other unhealthy items to absorb their menstrual blood," says Breanna. "We cried when we first learned that 25% of American mothers have to choose between buying food and providing their children with menstrual supplies. Each and every menstruator deserves and needs adequate menstrual education and resources to remain healthy throughout each month."

Besides WITKITS, this year alone, Brooke and Breanna also helped pass an Alabama period poverty law to ensure students in Title I schools have access to free period products, and they've presented their mission at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.

And to secure the future of menstrual equity and the continued movement to eradicate poverty of all kinds? Oh, Brooke and Breanna have that on lock, too. "Over the next few years, we are focusing on three areas: First, we are seeking funding to put vending machines of free period products on college campuses. Next, we are seeking funding to organize trips to Africa and the Caribbean to provide menstrual education and supplies. Finally, we want to present the President's Volunteer Service Award to corporate volunteers, students, and adult mentors who work to end period poverty," Brooke shares. Plus, with the launch of their WIT Leadership Development Academy, the sisters have recruited a squad of other middle and high school students of varying ethnicities and gender identities to study global concerns and commit themselves to addressing them.

"A girl's period is the seat of her power. It gives us the power to create life itself," says Breanna. "Embrace your power!"