

# Bridging the Gaps



**Never Too Early, Never Too Late:** A summer long commitment in empowering marginalized women to be more knowledgeable and comfortable about their bodies

**Student Interns:**

Alicia Selvera, University of Pennsylvania, Perelman School of Medicine  
Madeline Bradley, University of Pennsylvania, School of Dental Medicine

**Academic Preceptors**

Hillary Bogner, MD, MSCE, University of Pennsylvania, Perelman School of Medicine  
Christopher Renjilian, MD, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia  
Joan Gluch, PhD, RDH, University of Pennsylvania, School of Dental Medicine

**Community Preceptors:**

Lynette Medley, MEd, CEO No More Secrets MBS Inc.  
Nya McGlone, MS, COO No More Secrets MBS Inc.



## No More Secrets Mind Body Spirit Inc. at The SPOT. Period

The SPOT. Period is the nation's 1st Menstrual Hub and Uterine Wellness Center located in Germantown Philadelphia, PA.

**Mission:** To decrease uterine care and menstrual health disparities in underserved communities through the eradication of societal stigmas and propagation of resources and scientifically based information.



1 in 4 U.S. Menstruators will experience period poverty<sup>1</sup>

Menstrual Products are NOT covered by SNAP or WIC

People miss work, school, and job interviews

Toilet paper, socks, and rags are commonly used

Shame and stigma keeps people from seeking help

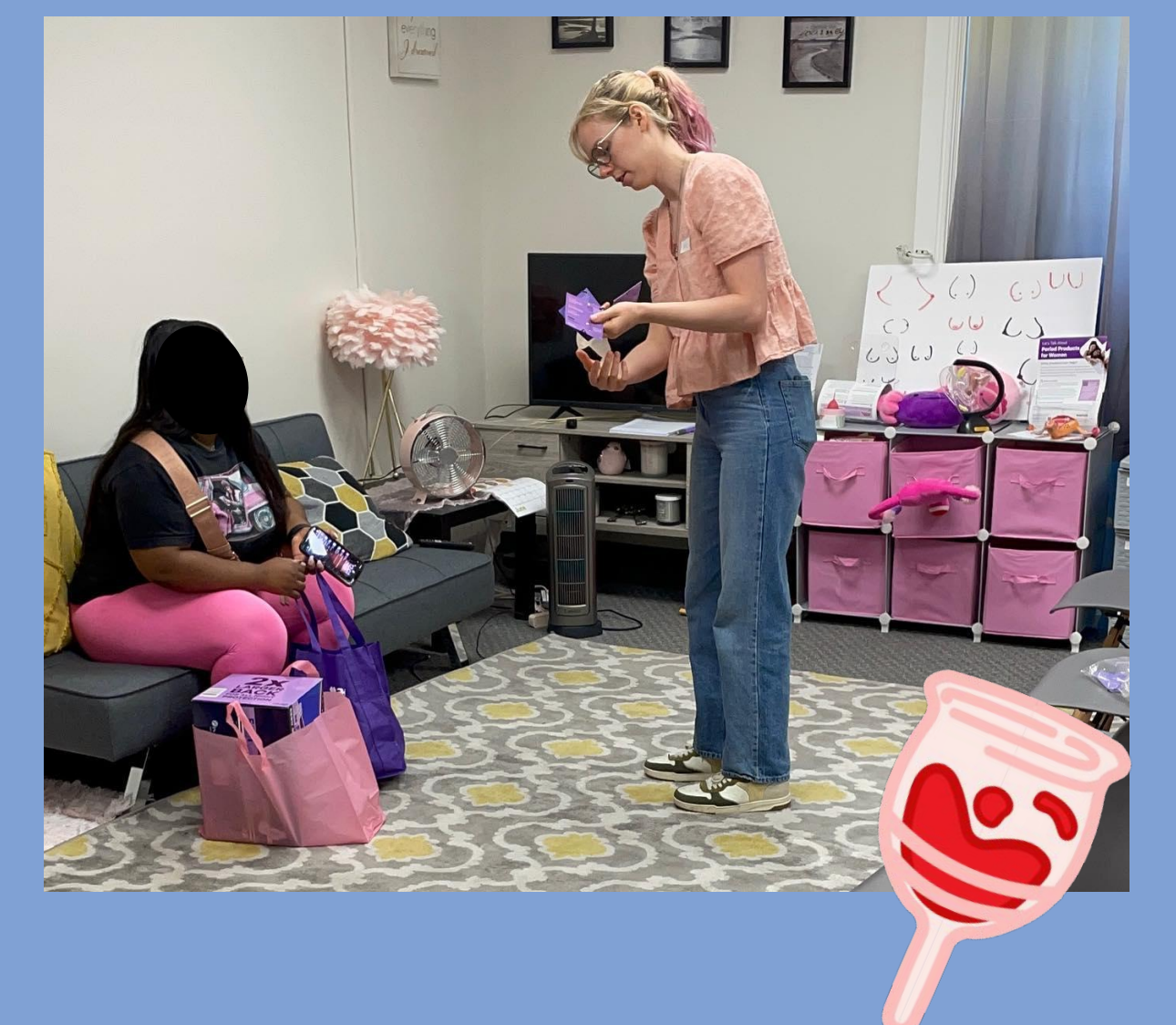


People of diverse backgrounds visit the SPOT. Language barriers often make the distribution of preferred products very difficult. This guide aims to facilitate the communication process.



## Empowerment through Educational Experiences

While the benefits of reusable menstrual products, such as menstrual cups and period underwear are vast and undeniable, they remain unfamiliar and a little scary for the community that No More Secrets MBS serves. We dedicated time to educating each visitor about product options, so that they felt empowered to use the products safely and enthusiastically.



## Know Yourself: Periodt

Know Yourself: Periodt was an interactive two-day session with girls ages 10-14 focused on self-love, purpose of menstruation, various menstrual products, and navigating through life's challenges. The goal was to destigmatize, dispel fear, and educate the young community about menstruation with the purpose of providing a path to make informed choices.

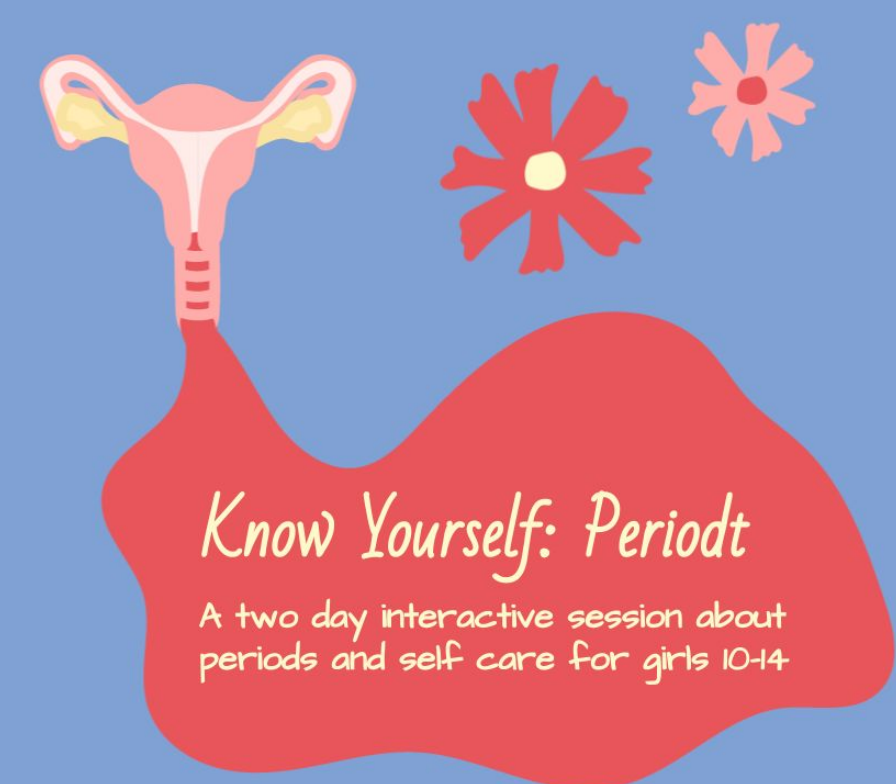


When asked what the most important takeaway was, one eleven year old declared, "Why we have a period!" When asked what problems they encountered we heard, "Boys make fun of girls and think we are dirty for being on our period."

It took time for some girls to warm up to the topics of conversations, and even towards the end there was still some awkward moments and nervous laughter. In the end, girls gained the confidence to talk about their bodies in a space that felt comfortable and safe.



There was a clear community formed amongst the girls. They even created a group chat to stay in touch.



July 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> | 10am - 2pm  
Lunch provided | Registration limited to first 10 to sign up  
no more secrets @NoMoreSecretsMBS SPOT.



Although the SPOT. education classes focus on menstrual products and personal hygiene, we recognize oral health affects overall systemic health. During "Tooth Tip Tuesday," proper brushing and flossing techniques were demonstrated. A discussion on drinking water and eating healthy foods also proved fruitful. Resources to contact dentists were provided as well as infographics on oral hygiene.



## REFLECTION

Packing period products, teaching educational classes, and leading community day taught student interns how to listen to the needs of community members and the importance of being intentional with how resources and information is given and received.

Through interactions with other community organizations and internal conversations at the SPOT. Period, interns learned about how systemic racism and implicit bias affects those who benefit from community outreach. The interns were also able to form a bridge between the organization and the academic institutions from which they come from, to build on sustainability and improve lives in the surrounding West Philadelphia community overall.

## Citations

Website: [www.nomoresecretsmbs.org](http://www.nomoresecretsmbs.org)  
1) Sebert Kuhlmann, Anne PhD, MPH; Peters Bergquist, Eleanor MA, MSPH; Danjoint, Djenie MPH; Wall, L. Lewis MD, DPhil. Unmet Menstrual Hygiene Needs Among Low-Income Women. Obstetrics & Gynecology: February 2019 - Volume 133 - Issue 2 - p 238-244 doi: 10.1097/AOG.0000000000003060