

Free menstrual products now available at Town of Caledon facilities]

By Zachary Roman

Caledon has taken a step towards addressing period poverty.

On February 8, the Town announced it was now offering free menstrual products at Town-operated facilities.

"Dispensers providing free tampons and pads can be found in many washrooms across the municipality," said the Town of Caledon in a statement. "Need one? Take one."

The move is in support of "The Red Mvmnt", a youth-led non-profit that's focused on advancing sustainable menstrual equity across the Greater Toronto Area.

In the Town's announcement, Mayor Annette Groves explained Canadian women spend over \$6,000 on menstrual products in their lifetime, which is a financial obstacle for many. Groves said offering free products in Town facilities is one way to provide period poverty relief.

"I'm proud to announce our participation in The Red Mvmnt," said Groves.

The United Nations describes period poverty as "the struggle many low-income women and girls face while trying to afford menstrual products."

Period poverty also refers to the increased financial burden placed on women due to the cost of menstrual supplies.

In 2022, Caledon Council approved a staff report that recommended Caledon offer free menstrual products. The report noted the estimated operating costs to offer the products per year would be about \$40,000, if at each dispenser location in Town a product was taken five times a day.

The City of Brampton and City of Mississauga already have free menstrual products available at their Town facilities. Caledon now offering free menstrual products means each Peel municipality is now on board with The Red Mvmnt.

Kevin Kyle, Caledon's Manager of Community Facilities, said in the announcement the Town is excited to be supporting The Red Mvmnt.

"When all the installations are completed, dispensers will be available providing free products to those in need at 22 Town-operated facilities," said Kyle.

Free menstrual products are now available at the following Town of Caledon facilities: Caledon Centre for Recreation and Wellness, Albion Bolton Community Centre, Mayfield Recreation Complex, Southfields Community Centre, Caledon East Community Complex, Cheltenham Community Room, Lloyd Wilson Centennial Arena, and Inglewood Community Centre.

The Town also plans to install free menstrual product dispensers in park washroom facilities across Town by this Spring.