

## Students Lead Environmental Summer Camp

By ADITHI RAO

This summer, I had the pleasure of volunteering as a counselor for NatureWay, an environmental science-themed summer camp co-led by the Student Environmental Education Coalition (SEEC). SEEC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization led by Kenneth Xu ('17) and students from schools all around the Triangle, especially NCSSM.

This year, NatureWay was hosted at East Chapel Hill High School and lasted for a week in August. NatureWay serves a diverse group of children between the ages of 7 and 11, all of whom share a profound interest in learning about how they can personally protect the environment.

With support from the Chapel Hill-Carrboro NAACP and United Church of Chapel Hill, we were also able to promote initiatives for diversity in science.

Throughout the week of NatureWay, we taught interactive lessons, explored nature trails, and created countless fun activities.

As a first-time counselor, I found that the kids not only paid attention to our lessons, but they also made excellent observations about the curriculum and related it

to what they had learned in elementary school. One of the activities the children enjoyed was learning about tectonic plates using graham crackers, icing, and Fruit Roll-Ups (of course, they enjoyed eating their science project too). Our field trips outside were also a great learning experience for the campers, serving as nice breaks from the classroom setting.

Pairing fun with education is not always an easy feat, but we learned how to pull it off! It was satisfying for us to know that the children were going home every day having learned new, exciting things to share with friends and parents.

Helping these children learn and have fun together was extremely enjoyable; it brought back good memories from my own childhood. Many of the counselors also took part in the games that we played outside, so every single person involved had a great deal of fun.

This was a wonderful experience, and I would strongly recommend that others get involved with NatureWay or SEEC's other programs, including service learning projects, grassroots campaigns, career conferences, and more.



Junior Vincent Xia helps junior Madeline Paoletti teach Earth science through hands-on activities.



Kenneth Xu leads summer campers in learning about a student-built pollinator garden.



Campers enjoy a well-deserved break outside.

## Don't Shush the Other F-Word

By VAISHNAVI SIRIPURAPU

"Why is feminism... bad, stupid, not needed." I watch as Google autocompletes my query. I look in vain for the question not being asked: Why is feminism so hated? So misunderstood? Feminism does not stand for creating an all-pervasive matriarchy or for belittling anyone who does not identify as a woman. So why has a word that simply means equality between the sexes morphed to be associated with such negative connotations?

In order to fully answer this question, and to understand what feminism is, one must understand what feminism isn't. Feminism does not mean misandry. Feminists do not believe in female dominance. Feminism is not just for people who identify as female; anyone can identify as a feminist. One of the more prominent reasons that feminism is often ignored or swept under

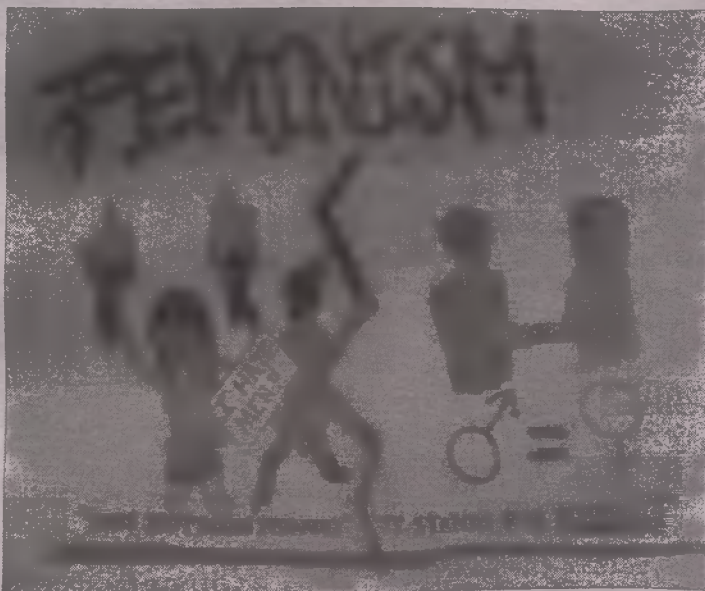


ILLUSTRATION BY GRACE STEFFEN

"Feminism does not mean misandry – it stands for equality."

the rug is because of the notion that it is not needed. There are still many issues on the feminist agenda facing everyone to this day, and change can only be achieved with enthusiastic support.

Feminism stands for many different messages, but most

importantly, it stands for equality. Simple equality between the sexes, in which no sex or gender is dominant or submissive to the other. Feminism is about erasing the prejudices we have for or against people with regard to their sexes or genders and about creating

equality for all people, regardless of those factors. With the rise of intersectional feminism, a breed of feminism in support of the inclusion of people of all backgrounds, the feminist message is open and inclusive of more people than ever before. However, despite the core message of feminism, it is shrouded in a murky layer of misconceptions and negativity. Why is it that proclaiming oneself as a feminist is often seen as an act of bravery rather than an act of normality?

One answer to these questions would be that feminism seems as if it "shuts out" anyone who does not identify as female. This is simply false, as feminism is open to everyone and impacts everyone. Another would be shifting the focus to radical feminists. Certainly, there are extremists in every political movement that speak louder than the majority. However, one of the reasons that radical feminists are portrayed as the face of femi-

nism is because of the social stigma for people who identify as a female to be docile and submissive. People who break this social norm are oftentimes wrongfully frowned upon and written off as "crazy." Feminists are often negatively sensationalized for fighting for the most basic of rights.

People always fear what they don't understand, and feminism is no exception. In order to erase the misconceptions and taboos surrounding feminism, the responsibility is with all of us to normalize the word and its message. Is equality taboo? We have the power as an individual to influence those around us, to stand up for what we believe in and to persuade others to do the same. Simply embracing the word "feminism" and its message without fear would be a huge step.

If you believe in equality between the sexes, then you are indeed a feminist.