

Condom dispensers proposed to help CAP STDs

BY ADRA COOPER | STAFF WRITER

If you're the eleventh student to go to the health office for condoms today, you're probably out of luck.

On Sept. 20, College Aids Prevention (CAP) proposed the installment of 12 on-campus condom dispensers to Community Senate because of the limited contraceptive options for residential students.

"We are proposing to install condom dispensers in the men's and women's bathrooms on the first floors of the dorms and in the laundry rooms of the apartments," said senior Erin Burns, member of CAP.

"Guilford has had a lot of problems with securing a condom source," Burns explained.

Part of the reason why condoms are difficult to come by on campus is because of a lack of funding. The health center does not have a budget for condoms, which allots them to only give a certain amount every day.

Guilford used to receive condoms from the non-profit agency Triad Health Project. Recently, the organization has stopped providing condoms because it could no longer afford to supply to a private college.

"One benefit of condom dispensers is that they would pay for themselves," Burns said. "The money placed into the machines would be used to purchase more condoms."

"Condom dispensers are a good, consistent source," Burns added. "They ensure that condoms are both affordable and available to students."

Even without condom dispensers, students currently have some means of obtaining condoms on campus.

"We put out 8-10 (condoms) per day in the container (in the health office)," said Helen Rice, director of Student Health, in an e-mail. "If we put out more than that, they take them all by the handfuls. (But) if anyone asks we always give them one."

However, in the likelihood that more than 10 Guilford students engage in sex everyday, where does this lead the unlucky 11th student to look for condoms?

"We give most of the condoms to Sandy Bowles, who passes them out to RAs to give out," Rice said.

The sexual awareness-themed Cobb House recently conducted a Guilford student sexual health and behavior survey that polled 146 traditional students. Of the participants, 65 were female, 57 were male and

24 did not specify their gender.

The survey showed that 42 percent of women and 39 percent of men reported feeling uncomfortable approaching their RAs for condoms.

Of the sexually active women who took the survey, 41 percent of them said that they would have sex without a condom if one was not immediately available.

"It's important that college kids have access to condoms in order to increase the chances of safe sex," said junior Katherine Rossini, house manager of Cobb. "However, we simply don't have enough resources to facilitate this."

Placing condom dispensers in residential halls would give students a 24-hour source of condoms. The dispensers would also allow students to obtain condoms anonymously, therefore eliminating the embarrassment of asking another person.

Of all the students Cobb House polled in its survey, 76 percent of students said that they would use condom dispensers if they were installed on campus.

Condom dispensers seem like a viable option for a relatively cheap, secure source for contraceptives. However, the proposal is

still in the very early stages.

"If dispensers are installed, it won't be until a few months down the road," Burns said. "We still need to get the approval of the administration, which will be much harder than the approval of the senate."

The administration may disapprove of the installment of condom dispensers because of the school's image. At the senate meeting, some senate members raised questions as to how the parents of prospective students would react if they saw or knew of condom dispensers on campus.

Many of the students at the meeting agreed that the appearance of the school should be secondary when regarding the health and wellbeing of students.

"It's the responsibility of the school to give students the resources to engage in safe and healthy sex," Rossini said.



Former president speaks at Guilford

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be their voice," Robinson said. "While I was there, I saw things like a man trying to shave his face — but he had two hooks instead of hands."

In 2002, Robinson left her post in the U.N.

"When I left the office I was happy that it was in a much stronger position," she said.

Robinson then moved to New York to begin her human rights campaign, Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative.

"I only need one set of statistics to drive home how cruel the modern world is when it comes to human rights: 30,000 children under 5 die every day from preventable disease and hunger," Robinson said.

Realizing Rights strives to make sustainable impacts on human rights issues. Their goal is to invoke systemic changes in governments, policy-making, and socially accepted beliefs.

"When it comes to change, it is important to recognize that if you want to make a sustainable difference, you have to do it in a sustainable way," Robinson said.

Two days before she gave her Bryan Series lecture, Robinson was in Mozambique attending a meeting on sexual health issues, rape

and sexual violence in small communities. She provided the statistic that girls in sub-Saharan Africa between 15 and 24 years old are six times more likely than males to be HIV-positive.

"The ideological refusal to talk is killing women and children every day," she said. "They are powerless."

The purpose of the meeting was to create and empower local women-run organizations with knowledge and education so that they can in turn educate others in their community.

"It doesn't mean much for a white western woman to come in and say 'you need to stop what you're doing,'" Robinson said. "But it means something coming from a local woman."

Establishing locally run organizations and empowering local women creates a lasting, systemic change, the kind of change Robinson and Realizing Rights work to achieve.

Robinson acknowledged that college students have an excellent record of direct service that provides short-term relief for human rights issues. She went on to explain what students can do and how students can get involved in making long term impacts in their community and the world.

"In the past few years, America

has been blind to much of the suffering and injustice in the world," said first-year Spencer Musick. "Robinson pointed out not only the problems, but practical solutions that we, as worldly-conscious college students, must consider."

Robinson said the simplest way young people can make a difference is by supporting fair trade businesses and ethical purchasing policies.

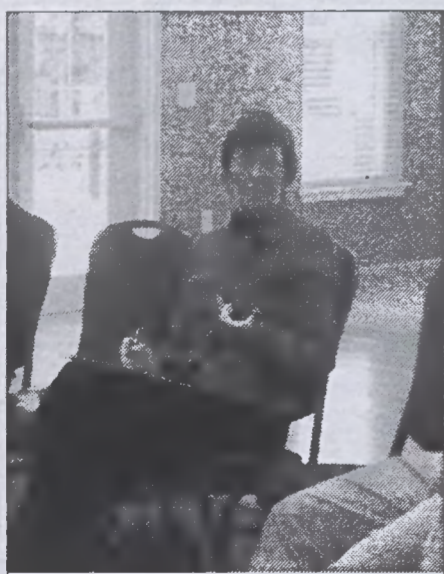
"There are good organizations out there that make positive impacts," Robinson said. "You are enriched if you know you have duties to the community and do something about it."

She cited Making Trade Fair, Amnesty International, and Oxfam as important, ethical groups for students to support in the fight against human rights violations.

"Oxfam and Amnesty are organizing a small arms campaign against the real weapons of mass destruction," Robinson said. "The machine guns and weapons that originate in the western, rich countries and make their way into the wrong hands."

At the end of the lecture, President Kent Chabotar presented Robinson with the first Bryan Series Presidential Award. The award acknowledges the speaker's commitment to one of Guilford's seven core values. Chabotar said that of these, Robinson represents Justice.

"I thought the Mary Robinson lecture was a really great experience," said junior Sophie Kanter. "It was amazing to see a woman who had been in such high positions, and who was so aware of the gender and race issues that are prevalent in our world today."



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