

# What About Feminism?



We've got lots to say about equality for all!

By Serenity Wood

It's crazy to me, but some people STILL believe that feminists are all angry lesbians who hate men. Or that feminists think they are better than men. Or that feminists think women deserve special privileges. But that wasn't ever what feminism was about, and it still isn't.

We still need feminism—more than ever. Surely no one would disagree with feminism's dictionary definition: “the advocacy of women's rights on the grounds of political, social, and economic equality to men.” Maybe more people would identify with feminism if it was called “equality-ism.” Would you?

Anti-feminist campaigns are real. In one effort, the “Women Against Feminism” campaign, women post selfies with the caption, “I Don't Need Feminism Because . . .” and add reasons such as “I believe that men aren't evil” or “women aren't better than men.” They clearly don't understand that feminism means EQUALITY.

Here are just a few reasons why we all need feminism.

These girls in India are demanding respect.

- \* Because women STILL make less money than men for doing the same job with the same education.
- \* Because it's more dangerous to be a woman than it is to be a soldier in a modern conflict.
- \* Because we want our bodies to be simply left alone, and not a constant target of discussion, disrespect, and objectification.
- \* Because the campaign to restrict women's choices about whether and when they have children is mostly led by men, who will never bear children.
- \* Because girls in many places are mistreated or denied education because they are girls.
- \* Because girls and women are told to be careful not to get raped, instead of teaching men not to rape.

So we don't need feminism?

Serenity, 14, California, likes sketching (that's her drawing at right), aerial arts, and Tame Impala.



## Debate Club: Online Snooping?

Like to give and get opinions about stuff that matters? Lots of NMG girls do, so they joined a debate club started by Lay (right), 11, California. A recent debate: Should parents look at a girl's texts and emails or install spy software?



Lay says: Parents assume the internet is filled with stalkers out to get you and schemes you'll fall for. These things exist, and parents should respectfully explain dangers. But putting on controls could make kids more likely to defy rules . . . My parents trust me with a lot of things, including internet safety, but they can check on my

computer or phone whenever they want to. Telling a kid that minor parental controls will happen is completely different than tracking your child's every move. Anna, 12, New York . . . Parents need to understand that someday their kids will be living on their own and they can't rely on their parents for their safety at all times. ChocolatelsTheAnswer, 13, Texas . . . My parents can read my texts anytime, but they never really do. If a parent is concerned, they should just talk with a kid. Charlotte, 12, Massachusetts . . . Spying is wrong on the face of it, but my mom saw an email from my friend saying she was hurting herself and my mom told her parents. All turned out well. Clara, 12, Rhode Island



## We Need to Fix Feminism

Here's a sampling of thoughts from our online discussions about feminism and sexism.

Some people tell me that I'm not a feminist because I have long girly hair, like fashion, and \*gasp\* WEAR MAKEUP!

I've heard people called out for being sexist when they rooted for a male individual rather than a female. Men who decide to vote for Bernie Sanders rather than Hillary Clinton are also called sexist. Since when do women have to be more powerful and more appreciated?

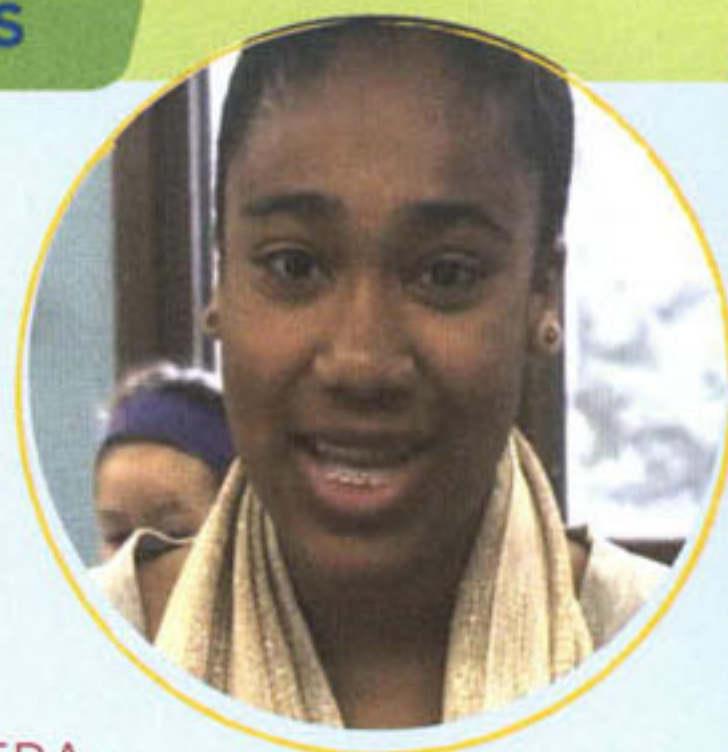
Women are more likely to be victims of violence, but men don't get the same kind of help that women victims get. Men also work in more life-threatening jobs. Fathers don't get custody of their children as often as women, because women are seen as being kind, caring and nurturing, and men are not generally seen as good parents.

We should celebrate the differences between men and women. Boys can paint and dance and not do sports; girls can be independent and build things. However, girls do not naturally grow up with a love for shooting and wrestling as much as boys do, and boys don't like Barbies as frequently.

We think sexism applies only to girls, but boys are constantly being told that they care about the girls only because of their bodies, or that boys are prone to be violent or aggressive. How do you think that makes them feel?

## Equality Seekers

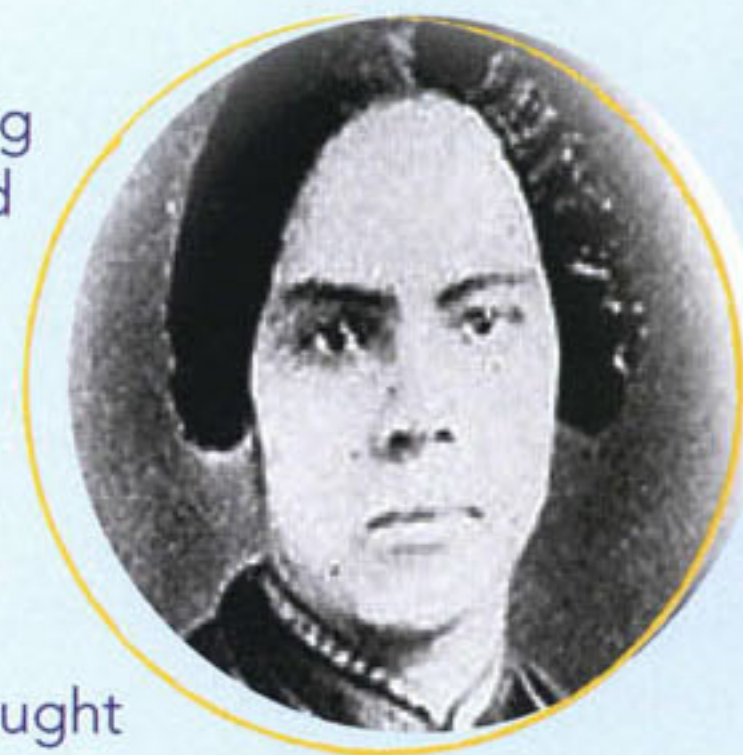
Robynne Oliver, 14, and her friends at the California all-girls Julia Morgan middle school want you to add your name to their petition to get the Equal Rights Amendment passed. Learn why thousands agree: Search "We Want Equality: Pass This Bill to Give ERA a Chance" at [Change.Org](http://Change.Org).



Helene de Boissiere Swanson walked 7,000 miles to promote ERA passage. Helene started on International Women's Day, March 8, 2014, and took a year to walk. After enduring blisters, rain, and exhaustion, Helene says she won't stop working for change:

"The time is NOW!" she says.

Women and girls have been beaten, jailed, force-fed during hunger strikes, and even killed over the centuries as they fight for equal rights. And millions more have spoken out and taken action in many different ways. Mary Ann Shadd Cary, the first African-American female publisher, fought for voting rights for ALL women.



## Is Recycling the Answer?

We all want a healthier planet, but what's the best way to help? We learn that we should "reduce, reuse, recycle"—would bypassing a new purchase or reusing items heal the Earth more than recycling? Here's what girls discussed recently.

So much energy is used to turn recycled things into new things, such as the energy used to transport the recycling to and from the factory and to manufacture the new thing. Recycling isn't a bad idea, but too many people think recycling is doing so much good for the planet. Reusing is better than recycling.



Kaia, 12, Ontario . . . Recycling creates jobs and makes new things from trash, so it's better than not recycling. Roxi, 13, England . . . Recycling is good because trees won't be cut down when we recycle paper; animals won't be harmed by trash such as plastics in the ocean; and soil and water won't be as contaminated by leeching from landfill trash. However, the factories that turn recyclables into something we can use again pollute our air and let more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Norah, 10, Minnesota