

Race shows high-heeled men can help women heal

With the weather warming up, it's a great time to spread our activism outdoors. In fact, it isn't an uncommon sight to see flocks of people pounding the pavement to raise money for various causes.

Benefit races are a wonderful way to spread awareness and attract large crowds. However, many of the feminine issues races are filled almost entirely with women. Pictures show hordes of women proudly donning pink race shirts — but there is scarcely a beard to be found. Alternatively, male-issue races, such as the PACE (Prostate Awareness and Cancer Education) race, tend to attract a more balanced gender profile.

My favorite charity race — and the one that totally blows away any form of gender isolation — is the “Walk a Mile in Her Shoes” benefit. It's a benefit to raise awareness about rape, sexual assault and gender violence. However, it's marketed mainly toward men.

A bunch of men running around in high heels draws a lot of attention, which outweighs any negative effects of its cutesy nature. It's simply clever marketing, and it's marketing that's finally being used for a great cause.

So many advertising campaigns use gender stereotypes simply to push certain products, which is a strategy that just seems exploitative to me. Take for example the latest Axe commercial, which uses the phrase “women get bored easily” and shows a man playing peek-a-boo to get a woman's attention to sell the company's new hair product.

You could argue that using high-heels as a symbol for women isn't modern or feminist enough, but I think it fits pretty well. High-heels are one of the many items women are tied to if they want to be considered beautiful by mainstream society.

Sex and
Sensibility



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However, women often pay the price for this, as evidenced by blisters and foot problems.

That any man would put himself through that pain for a mile for a women's cause is amazing.

The organization's website says, “sexualized violence does not just affect women.” Although this is true, it is often overlooked; sexual violence affects the partners, boyfriends, sons and fathers of victims. That's what makes this event — as well as any gender-based event that is supported by the opposite sex — so important.

These events are ways of starting to take ownership of discrimination and hatred as a society rather than turning our backs on problems that don't directly relate to our specific demographics.

The “Shoes” walks are scheduled year round. There are a couple throughout Kansas and Missouri, but no events are organized around Lawrence. It would be easy for the student body to organize an event and raise a lot of money for an issue that affects us all and is especially prevalent in the college demographic.

Sexual assaults have unfortunately hit close to home with the recent serial assaults during school breaks. There's not much we can do about the attacks themselves, but we can raise awareness and come together as a community to fight back.

Plus, we can have a little fun outdoors while doing it.

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