

PEPPER POD

# SitRep



## Welcoming the Legion to the Pepper Pod



You know when you meet people and jive immediately?

Well, that was how it went with our new friends from the Royal Canadian Legion National Headquarters.

We welcomed Steven Clark (National Executive Director), Alexa Pasha (Veterans Services) and Lia Taha Cheng (Poppy & Remembrance Division) to the Pepper Pod last week.

For over 2 hours we shared information and ideas about the Pepper Pod, our programming, events and future plans. It was such a pleasure to spend time with like-minded people who are also committed to the veteran community.

We look forward to many more adventures together.

## Servicewomen Salute Conference

Cathy met with Rosemary Parks, Lynn Kennedy and Elaine Waddington Lamont to talk about plans for the upcoming Servicewomen Salute Aspire & Inspire event.

The conference, produced by Service Women Salute Canada, will be held at the Ottawa Convention Centre October 12-14, 2023.

The schedule includes artist sessions, interesting historical information about women who have served and a look ahead. The 2-day conference will be capped with a black-tie gala on Friday October 13th, MC'd by Sandra Perron and Cathy Priestman.

The following Saturday, there will be a tour to the Women Warriors' Healing Garden and lunch at the Pepper Pod.

*Tickets are available at the SWS website:*  
<https://www.swsaspireinspire.ca/aspire-inspire>

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# Outdoor Classroom Project

**Ooooh, this is a big deal!**



If you've been to the Pepper Pod, you know that it's breathtakingly beautiful, warm, and inviting. It's a large building with a cozy feel but there is limited space to host large groups so... we're going to fix that.

We're building an outdoor classroom – right in the forest!

It's still early days but plans are underway for construction to begin in the spring. We'll have a 3-season space to host larger groups and to gather for outdoor activities. It will be the perfect place for a snack after snowshoeing, lunch after paddleboarding, or simply to sit together and catch-up.

The most exciting part about this project is that it will be FOR women veterans – BY women veterans. That's right, the project will be constructed by women veterans and along the way, these already accomplished women will be able to learn new building and construction skills.

We have received a generous grant from the Canadian Legacy Project to get the project off the ground and to cover a portion of the materials. We are grateful for their support, and we'll work to find the remaining funds over the coming months.

Stay tuned for opportunities to contribute to this exciting project. And we'll keep you updated on the progress of the outdoor classroom in the spring.

# Team Canada – Invictus Games

The Pepper Pod Team is cheering especially hard for Team Canada this year. Three Lifeshop Grads will be involved with the Invictus Games in Düsseldorf, Germany in September.

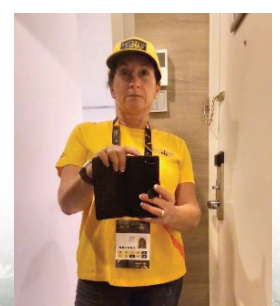
- **Joanna Labonte** – Competitor - Rowing, Discus, Shot put, and Sitting Volleyball.
- **Natalie Chafe-Yuan** – Competitor – Rowing, Swimming and Volleyball.
- **Bianca Vachon** – Volunteer – Bianca will be support to Team France.

These three women are already champions, and they now have the opportunity to share their talents on an international stage.

The word "Invictus" means "unconquered" and the Invictus Games exemplify just this. This year's games in Germany will host over 500 competitors from 20 nations all coming together with a common background. The games were founded in 2014 by Prince Harry and provide the opportunity for serving members and veterans who have suffered injuries to compete.

You can learn more about these incredible competitors and the rest of Team Canada at the Soldier On website: <https://www.soldieron.ca/team-canada/invictus/meet-team>

We know you won't be able to hear us from across the pond but, we're sure our neighbours at home will hear us cheering for you! Go for gold!



## Out & About – Beechwood 150 Gala

Sandra Perron and Cathy Priestman attended the Beechwood Cemetery 150 Gala on August 17th.

It was a wonderful evening that brought together diverse and eclectic members of the community. The RCMP, CAF and Defence Attachés were present. There were political members from city council and provincial parliament. The biologist who cares for the wetlands at Beechwood was present and some of the masons who engrave the monuments were also there. The board was well represented, and the room was filled with respect and celebration for the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Beechwood Cemetery.

The speeches were short and punchy – a perfect blend of reverence, respect and acknowledgement for all that Beechwood does for the families and the community.

It was a pleasure to attend and – ummm - we're still talking about that caprese salad! Seriously, who remembers a salad two weeks later!? Hats off to the caterers from Tulip & Maple!

Thank you to the Beechwood Team for the invitation and for being an unwavering supporter of the Pepper Pod and all those in the military and veteran communities.





## REGISTRATION IS OPEN

### Lifeshop I

The Pepper Pod's signature Lifeshop™ program is a safe, confidential and powerful weekend retreat for women who are (or will be) transitioning out of military service, as well as for military spouses (women). Participants gain practical resources and invaluable support to facilitate an effective transition—even if their release was many years ago.

Lifeshops are offered in English or French in Chelsea, QC and in several locations across Canada. We travel to you, our sisters in arms, and meet in locations close to veteran communities.

#### Calendar

**27-29 October 2023**

Ottawa (English) (FULL)  
At The Pepper Pod

**3-5 November 2023**

Ottawa (English)  
At The Pepper Pod

**17 – 19 November 2023**

Halifax (English)  
In Halifax

**1-3 December 2023**

Kingston/Trenton  
(English)  
At The Pepper Pod

**12-14 January 2024**

Montréal/Québec  
(Français)  
At The Pepper Pod

**26-28 January 2024**

Ottawa (English)  
At The Pepper Pod

**23-25 February 2024**

Ottawa (Français)  
At The Pepper Pod

**22-24 March 2024**

Petawawa/North Bay  
At The Pepper Pod

**12-14 April 2024**

Edmonton (English)  
In Edmonton

### Lifeshop II

In Lifeshop™ II, you're invited to be bold in living your life purposefully. You'll be immersed in a safe and supportive environment, surrounded by women who share your experiences serving in Canada's military or RCMP. Each small cohort of eight women will be guided by Sandra Perron — seasoned facilitator and CEO of The Pepper Pod.

Through a series of experiential exercises, you'll get clear about your values, discover your strengths and release any limiting beliefs that may be holding you back. Based in the principles of neurolinguistic programming (NLP), Lifeshop™ II gives you the time, space and tools to connect with your heart and gain a deeper understanding of your purpose and values.

By the end of the weekend, you'll have a clear vision of your purpose and what fulfillment means to you. And you'll have the tools and insights you need to enter this BOLD new chapter of your life with confidence.

#### Calendar

**22-24 September 2023**

Ottawa (English) (FULL)  
At The Pepper Pod

**12-14 April 2024**

Ottawa (English)  
At The Pepper Pod

*Registering for a Lifeshop™ is a big leap of faith. It takes courage, and we hope you considering joining us. When you register, you'll be joining a community of over 275 women who've completed a Lifeshop™ since 2019. The program has a 99.8% satisfaction rating, so you know you're in caring and capable hands.*

If you'd like more information, contact us at [info@pepperpod.ca](mailto:info@pepperpod.ca) or register on our website: <https://pepperpod.ca/programs/lifeshop-1/>

## Ha, Ha! Pepper Pod Block Leave

So, here's how the block leave situation played out... basically, everyone of us continued to work for the first week but not tell the others. We know we're supposed to be all about balance yet, we had several items to wrap up so we kept quiet, ha, ha.

Week two, we all went in our separate directions.

Pepper Pod block leave meant different things to different team members.

- ✓ **Linda** - Visited her family.
- ✓ **Francine** - Went to the cottage.
- ✓ **Cathy** - Flew to Los Angeles with her husband.
- ✓ **Sandra** - ... Oh, Sandra ... She rented a Kubota and went to work all over the Pepper Pod property.

If you know Sandra, you know she loves to create, build and drive anything that smells like diesel.



## Beyond Trauma Dates



Beyond Trauma is a transformational one-day retreat for women who have experienced sexual trauma and is offered in a private, safe and confidential manner.

The program is open to women serving in the Canadian Armed Forces as well as women veterans. Beyond Trauma provides tools to help you in healing trauma, building connections and growing relationships.

You'll celebrate successes, have each other's back, reduce feelings of isolation and build a community of well-being and support.

We're offering programs every month at the Pepper Pod from September into the spring.

- 13 September 2023
- 18 October 2023
- 6 December 2023
- 17 January 2024
- 31 January 2024

If you feel like Beyond Trauma may be a good fit for you and you'd like more info, check out our website and register today. Registration is open now with bookings beginning in September 2023.

<https://pepperpod.ca/programs/beyond-trauma/>



# Summer Work Party

## TWO TRUCKLOADS OF MULCH!

Yep, that's what we had to tackle on top of all the weed wrestling, root pulling, rock moving, shrub planting and rock laying.

Eight wheelbarrows all rolling around the property like a well-oiled machine. Vines and weeds being flung into the air. Buildings being washed and patios dug out. Simply incredible!

It was a busy day at last week's work party and there is no way that it would have been possible without the almost 30 people who arrived to help!

We had some longtime friends of the Pepper Pod, many new faces and ½ a soccer team from a rec league. Those young men literally moved mountains of mulch.

It was wonderful to see so many smiling faces from previous Pepper Pod programs. A sense of community and warmth could be felt everywhere... along with the bug spray... that was also everywhere thank goodness!

THANK YOU!!!!



# HIGHLIGHTING OUR PARTNERS



## CANADIAN LEGACY PROJECT

We are very grateful to the Canadian Legacy Project for making the first contribution to the Pepper Pod's outdoor classroom project. This generous donation will allow us to get the project off the ground and the end product will result in many more opportunities for connection at the Pepper Pod. We profoundly thank you for making this project possible.

## THE POOL BOYS SOCCER TEAM

We're huge fans of the Pool Boys Soccer Team! Seven of their team members helped out during our most recent work party. They're all university students – so they didn't need to track volunteer hours. They just offered to pitch-in when they heard how much work was to be done. Gentlemen, we are incredibly grateful for your support and we thank you for doing so much of the heavy lifting that day.



## NOTE THESE DATES!

**13 September**  
Beyond Trauma

**17 September**  
Army Run

**20 September**  
Wonder Woman  
Wednesday (TBC)

**22-24 September**  
Lifeshop II – Ottawa (FULL)

**30 September**  
National Day for Truth &  
Reconciliation

**12-14 October**  
Servicewomen's Salute  
Aspire & Inspire Event

**18 October**  
Beyond Trauma

**27 – 29 October**  
Lifeshop I – Ottawa (FULL)

**3-5 November**  
Lifeshop I - Ottawa

**17-19 November**  
Lifeshop I - Halifax

**26 November**  
Veteran Holiday Market

## Can't join us?

Why not donate to support our mission?

[DONATE HERE](#)

We need your help to maintain this centre and to keep developing our programs. We want to grow intelligently, diversify our services, and keep the retreat centre beautiful.