

PEPPER POD

# SitRep



## Welcome to our new Lifeshop Tribe!

**It has been chilly, but our hearts are warm.** We welcomed a new tribe to the Pepper Pod community in January. They came together from different parts of Quebec to share their stories, find commonalities in their journeys, and celebrate their strength.



## We're back! And we are excited about 2024!

The Pepper Pod team is back in full force after a restful holiday break spent with family and friends. We started the New Year with a strategic planning session, mindmapping all the wonderful ideas for new activities and programs. Your trust and support in our team makes us feel fortunate to contribute to growing and strengthening the community of women veterans across Canada.

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# VAC Minister's Visit

We were honoured to host the Minister of Veterans Affairs and the Associate Minister of National Defence, The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor and her team for a day at the Pepper Pod.

A lot of ground was covered in a short time - tours and information about the Pepper Pod, a fireside chat about veterans' wellbeing, and a fun afternoon of cooking.

The Minister and her team rolled up their sleeves to prepare a meal for the weekend's Lifeshop tribe. In a massive show of support and generosity, about 15 members of the Minister's team stayed into the afternoon cooking and preparing meals. They even did the dishes!

Thank you for the opportunity to exchange profoundly with members of the department. As always, we are grateful for the ongoing support the Pepper Pod receives from VAC... doing the dishes was really above and beyond!







## Snow-SHE-ing Under the Stars - Any snow-stompers out there?

Registration is now open for snow-SHE-ing!

- **28 Feb 2024**
- **6:00 pm – 8:30 pm**
- **Cost: Free**

Every snow often, we like to snowshoe. LOL Bring your snowshoes to the Pepper Pod and Sandra will lead you on an evening trek through the beautiful Gatineau Forest. You'll return to the Pepper Pod for a campfire, hot chocolate, snacks and the company of amazing women.

Please note that parking is limited so carpooling is appreciated where possible.

We'd love to see you at the Pepper Pod! Drag your buddies out. It takes one to snow one! Hahaha!

**Register here:** [Snow-SHE-ing Under the Stars - The Pepper Pod](#)



## Chief Professional Conduct and Culture Visit

Gathering the stories of 300+ Lifeshops graduates and sharing the main themes (without ever compromising confidentiality) with members of the Defence Team who can affect change is one of our most impactful activities. And we love it when military leaders ask to come have a chat with us so that they may become better champions of change.

This month, we welcomed one of the CPCC teams, DGERIS, and we discussed the need to talk and learn more about women's bodies, the impact of sexual assault, the need to challenge biases, and other important lessons learned. The energy in the room was impressive as we brainstormed ideas for progressive policies.

### ARE YOU A LIFESHOP™ GRAD?

We'd love to share your thoughts with our readers.

Send us a little blurb on what the retreat meant to you.

[Cathy@PepperPod.ca](mailto:Cathy@PepperPod.ca)



You are cordially invited to

celebrate  
**INTERNATIONAL  
WOMEN'S DAY**



Celebrate International  
Women's Day at the Pepper Pod

**SAVE THE DATE!**

6 March 2024  
6:00 – 8:30 pm

Join us for a spectacular evening at the Pepper Pod to celebrate International Women's Day!  
This year's theme is INSPIRE INCLUSION.

Registration will open soon, and seats will be limited so keep your eyes on our social media (FB, IG, LI) for the opening of registration.

We also have a great plan for individual tribes all over Canada to celebrate. Stay tuned for more info!

**Stay tuned to our  
social media!**

We have a great  
plan for tribes across  
Canada to celebrate  
International  
Women's Day!

## Upcoming Beyond Trauma Dates

*"I made more progress in 6 hours at the Pepper Pod, than I have in three years of therapy. Thank you!"*

Beyond Trauma is a transformational one-day retreat for women who have experienced sexual trauma. The program is offered in a private, safe, and confidential manner. The curriculum was personally designed by Sandra Perron, founder of the Pepper Pod and it is specifically for women currently serving in the Canadian Armed Forces and women veterans.

Beyond Trauma provides tools to help participants in overcoming trauma, building connections, and growing relationships. Your group of 6 women will have the opportunity to journey together as you explore what options are open to you to live an authentic life.

This 1-day session runs from 0900 hrs – 1600 hrs. There is no cost to attend, and all meals and snacks are provided.

### Upcoming Dates:

- **15 Feb 2024** @ Pepper Pod (English)
- **28 Feb 2024** @ Pepper Pod (French)
- **18 Mar 2024** in Halifax (English)
- **15 Apr 2024** in Edmonton (English)

If you think Beyond Trauma may be helpful for you, we welcome you to register.

**Register here:** <https://pepperpod.ca/programs/beyond-trauma/beyond-trauma-registration/>

If you have any questions, please get in touch with us at [info@pepperpod.ca](mailto:info@pepperpod.ca).

The Pepper Pod is grateful to our valued partners. *This program is funded by the Department of National Defence's Sexual Misconduct Support and Resource Centre.*

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Canada

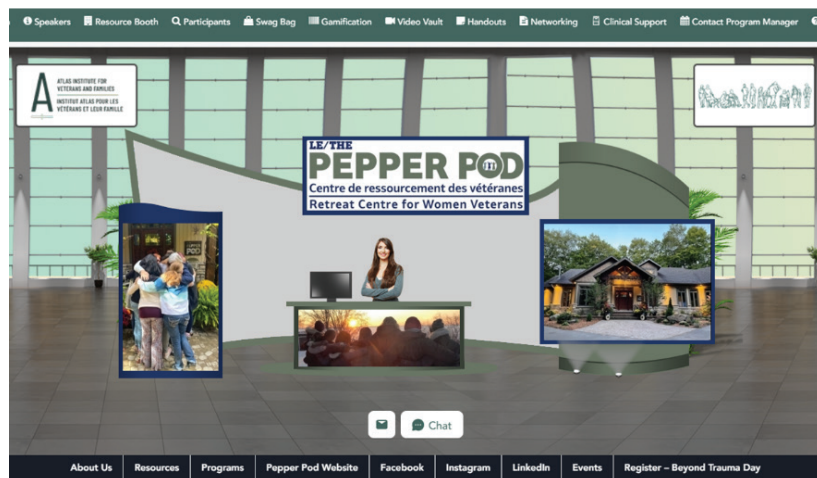


## Thank You to our She Shed Volunteers!

We were lucky to have a power-trio of volunteers to help bring order to the She Shed this month. Our little store had a Christmas season hangover and needed some attention.

A huge thank you goes out to Chelsea Poole, Sarah Heer and Kathy Haire for sharing a Saturday with us.

There are new concepts brewing in the She Shed. Stay tuned for new products and ideas!



## Atlas Virtual Summit

The Pepper Pod was pleased to participate in our second virtual Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families. The content for the 2-day event was a collection of current topics and lived experiences. The online platform made it fun and engaging. Cathy hosted the Pepper Pod virtual booth and answered questions about the organization and our programming.

Congratulations to the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families on another successful virtual summit and thank you for the valuable research you conduct to support the veteran and family communities. We look forward to attending your events for years to come.



## Lifeshop™ Grad in Action!

**What an incredible opportunity – WOW!**

Christine Carignan is a Lifeshop™ Grad and has been a true supporter of the Pepper Pod from the early days. Christine owns Diaki Experiences, a consulting firm that specializes in growing & propelling human potential through experiential learning. <https://diaki-experiences.com/>

She recently had the opportunity to travel to Paris to conduct United Nations Peacekeeping Military Gender Advisory Training to 21 participants from 13 countries over the course of 10 days.

Christine took a few copies of Sandra Perron's book "Out Standing in the field" and gave them away as gifts. In the photo, she's sharing the book with Captain Adama Hawa Bah from Guinea who celebrated her birthday while on course.

***We're so proud and inspired by you Christine!***





**A FORCE FOR WOMEN: HER STORY**  
 Writing workshops for women-identified Canadians who have served in the military

**VIRTUAL ON ZOOM**  
 JANUARY 18 - FEBRUARY 15  
 EVERY THURSDAY, 2:30 - 4 PM EST

*No writing experience required!  
 Every workshop is unique!*

 WRITERS COLLECTIVE OF CANADA  TRUE PATRIOT LOVE  CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR THE MILITARY COMMUNITY

**REGISTER FREE:**  
[rb.gy/aj1gf](https://rb.gy/aj1gf)

## A Force for Women: Her Story

Check out this neat writing program from the Writers Collective of Canada - **A FORCE FOR WOMEN: HER STORY**.

The program starts on January 18, 2024 and will run every Thursday until February 15, 2024. Intake is ongoing so you can still join if you missed the first few classes.

- **WHEN:** Every Thursday at 2:30 - 4 PM EST
- **WHERE:** Virtual on Zoom
- **REGISTER:** <https://rb.gy/aj1gf>

A Force For Women: Her Story is a set of exploratory writing workshops funded by True Patriot Love - Military Creative Arts Fund and the Captain Nichola Goddard Fund.

The workshops welcome Canadian women who have served in the military. Each session will be co-facilitated by a trained WCC facilitator with military experience — offering a brave space to write, listen and share.

**Sessions are free to participants — no writing experience is necessary, and each session is unique!**

**WHAT HAPPENS IN A WCC WORKSHOP**

**INSPIRATION:** We write to prompts chosen to ignite deep creative expression and exploration.

**WRITING IN COMMUNITY:** We share a space for private exploration.

**BRAVERY:** We share what we have written (writers are welcome to pass if they choose).

**DEEP LISTENING:** We respond to each others' work by reflecting back what is strong and memorable about the writing.

 **LEARN MORE:**  
[wcc-cec.org/what-to-expect](https://wcc-cec.org/what-to-expect)

**WHAT WON'T HAPPEN IN A WCC WORKSHOP**

**CRITIQUE:** Instead, WCC workshops provide empowering feedback on each writer's first-draft writing.

**TECHNIQUE:** WCC workshops focus on exploring each writer's authentic voice, regardless of form or technique.

**TRAINING:** Rather than "teaching", WCC workshops illuminate the innate creative genius in all of us.

 **LEARN MORE:**  
[wcc-cec.org/what-to-expect](https://wcc-cec.org/what-to-expect)

(Copy borrowed from WCC Facebook page with permission.)

## Summer is coming... Eventually!



Looking to make a splash at our next SUP Ladies?! – Stand-up paddleboarding event?

Check out these savings for CF One Members – an additional 15% off the listed or current sale price of stand-up paddleboards from Different Breed!

<https://differentbreed.ca/>

***P.S. Our next SUP Ladies Paddleboarding event will be on 6 July 2024.***

## Hot Topic!

If you'll be sleeping at the Pepper Pod in the future, rest assured that we consider many factors when setting the nighttime temperature... age, night sweats, hot flashes, etc.



The sleeping thermostat is set at a brisk 17 degrees but don't worry, we have many cozy blankets for those of you who can still regulate your body temperature.

We make it work for everyone!

***P.S. Back-up tweezers are located in the bathroom cupboard. 😊***





## Quebec Veterans Foundation Historical Event



We are pleased to share this message from the Quebec Veterans Foundation. They are a close partner of the Pepper Pod and are hosting a military history event. Please see below for more details.

Join us on February 20 for a fascinating lecture on Quebec military history by Jacques Bouchard, veteran and holder of a Master's degree in History!

Jacques Bouchard has extensive military experience. His presentation on the Battle of the St. Lawrence was met with resounding success last year in the Gaspésie and Bas-Saint-Laurent regions. Now he's back with a virtual version. Don't miss out on this opportunity! Please note that the presentation is in French.

### ***Jacques Bouchard, speaker***

- Date: February 20, 2024
- Time: 12 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- Cost: Free (sponsored by the Quebec Veterans Foundation)
- Web access: MS Teams
- More information: [info@fqv-qvf.ca](mailto:info@fqv-qvf.ca)

## HIGHLIGHTING OUR PARTNERS

# LOCKHEED MARTIN

### **The Pepper Pod team received a surprise in January.**

In a warm and caring email, Lockheed Martin expressed how pleased they are to me members of the Pepper Pod forest and they pledged their continued support to the Pepper Pod. We had no idea that this generous gift was coming – in addition to the \$25,000 they donated last year, Lockheed Martin offered a further \$10,000 to support our effort to build a stronger community of women veterans. We'd like to extend a huge thank you to Lockheed Martin for this thoughtful and generous gift.



## UPCOMING 2024 DATES

9-11 Feb	Lifeshop™ I (Kingston/Belleville) in English @The Pepper Pod
15 Feb	Beyond Trauma @The Pepper Pod (English)
23-25 Feb	Lifeshop™ I (Ottawa) in French @The Pepper Pod
28 Feb	Beyond Trauma @The Pepper Pod (French)
28 Feb	Snow-She-ing Under the Stars
1 Mar	Women in Defence and Security (WiDS) Breakfast in Ottawa
6 Mar	Celebrate International Women's Day @ the Pepper Pod
8 Mar	International Women's Day – Pepper Pod Display @ Carling Campus
15-17 Mar	Lifeshop™ I (Halifax) in English in Halifax
15-17 Mar	No Agenda Weekend @The Pepper Pod (tentative)
18 Mar	Beyond Trauma in Halifax (English)
22-23 Mar	Lifeshop™ I (Petawawa/North Bay) in English @The Pepper Pod
1 April	Opening of Registration for National Pepper Pod Picnic Day
12-14 Apr	Lifeshop™ I in Edmonton (English)
12-14 Apr	No Agenda Weekend @The Pepper Pod (tentative)
15 Apr	Beyond Trauma in Edmonton (English)
1 May	Opening of Dragon Boat Team Registration
9 Jun	National Pepper Pod Picnic Day!
6 Jul	SUP Ladies?! Stand Up Paddleboarding at Meech Lake



### Time to dust off your favourite potato salad recipes!

For the enthusiastic and forward-thinking person who wrote to us inquiring about the date for **National Pepper Pod Picnic Day 2024**, we're thrilled to announce that it will be June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024!

Registration will open on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2024.

We applaud your eager passion and commitment to this fun, cross-country day!



### 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.