

PEPPER POD

SitRep



Welcome New Lifeshop™ Tribes

Welcome to our new tribes from Halifax and Petawawa/Ottawa/Kingston... we cast a wide net to bring these special women together!



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International Women's Day at the Pepper Pod

This year, the Pepper Pod community celebrated International Women's Day with a mocktail party and new friends. Thanks to generous support from **Lockheed Martin Canada**, we were able to welcome several new women to the Pepper Pod and we also visited with many familiar faces.

We had a beautiful spread of food, fun draws for cool prizes and tours of the centre. Thank you, Lockheed Martin Canada, for your continued support and for being part of our forest.



Did you check out our special edition newsletter in celebration of International Women's Day?
Visit PepperPod.ca



International Women's Day Across Canada

Pepper Pod Lifeshop Tribes from across Canada gathered in celebration of International Women's Day. They enjoyed brunch, tea, dinner, and cake. Paint Nite, ax throwing and more. But most of all they enjoyed each other's company.

Thank you to **Lockheed Martin Canada** for assisting with this cross-country program and for your continual support to the Pepper Pod.



VAC National Stakeholder's Summit & Women Veterans Forum



The Pepper Pod, together with other organizations that support veterans such as True Patriot Love, La Fondation Québécoise des Vétérans and the Commissionaires attended a two-day National Stakeholder's Summit in Montreal 5-6 March 2024. Members of Parliament, such as Luc Desilets, the Co-chair of the Standing Committee on Veterans (ACVA), were also present. Panel members shared stories of their Invictus games participation and break-out sessions solicited input for ways to improve appreciation programs and other wellness initiatives.

The Stakeholder Summit was followed by a two-day Women Veterans Forum, 7-8 March 2024. We heard from a diverse panel of current serving members whose powerful testimonies repeatedly expressed gratitude to the women in the room who had paved the way for them to flourish. Another panel dealt with some of the research being done on the link between women's bodies and mental health, such as the causal relationship between fibromyalgia and mental health.

Stories shared by women in attendance were often painful and angry. Mental health practitioners, elders and VAC support personnel were on stand-by during both events. Minister Petitpas Taylor barely left the room for the entire four days, taking time to listen to individual veterans as well as attend the main sessions. She will likely walk away with many reflections on what can be done to address some of the concerns raised by women veterans.



The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor's Tupperware

When The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence came to the Pepper Pod with her team, she brought a yummy dessert for the women attending a Lifeshop™ that weekend.

The Minister carried the dessert in a Tupperware container (circa 1952). 😊 Sandra returned the Tupperware to the Minister at the National VAC Stakeholder conference and here is what that unexpected encounter looked like, "Hi Sandra... is that my Tupperware?!"



Hi, Sandra!



Is that my Tupperware?



Thanks for returning it...



in the middle of the Summit!



Tabling of Bill C-66 – An Amendment to the National Defence Act

On Thursday, March 21, 2024, The Honourable Bill Blair, Minister of National Defence tabled Bill C-66, a significant amendment to the National Defence Act. The Military Justice System Modernization Act will legislate the transfer of reporting, investigation and prosecution of military sexual misconduct from the military chain of command and military police to civilian systems.

Joining HCol Michelle Douglas (LGBT Purge Fund Executive Director), Yuri Cormier (Canadian Defence Association Executive Director) and Charlotte Duval-Lantoine (Canadian Global Affairs Institute), our own Cathy Priestman (Executive Director of the Pepper Pod) was invited to share this monumental moment with the Minister.

The bill is a result of consulting over 16,000 people and addresses nine recommendations from the Fish & Arbour Reports. It was a privilege to have been invited to the table for such a significant announcement.

“There is no other profession where you need to ask permission from your boss to seek justice or safety. ... I will entertain comments from other parties that strengthen this bill. I will not entertain any comments that weaken this bill.”

The Honourable Bill Blair, Minister of National Defence

The Minister thanked each of the attendees for contributing to consultations and for ongoing support to the military and veterans. MP Marie-France Lalonde was also in attendance and will be managing the bill through committee. The Minister thanked Renée Filiatrault who was singularly focused on moving this bill forward.



WiDS Reception

Women in Defence and Security (WiDS) hosted a reception the evening before the WiDS breakfast, which took place on 29 February 2024. The event was sponsored by SAAB, and the President of the Treasury Board, Anita Anand spoke to the gathering about the need for more women in politics.

President Anand talked about how she began in politics and how she chose to ignore the naysayers and doubters who claimed she wouldn't be able to achieve her goals. She encouraged other women to listen to themselves and disregard anybody who says they aren't capable.

WiDS President, Julia Scouten and her team hosted another excellent event. The room felt warm and personal, and it was easy for people to connect. It was the perfect evening before the impressive WiDS breakfast.



WiDS Breakfast

Women in Defence and Security (WiDS) throw what might be their best event yet! The 2024 WiDS Breakfast was sold out with 1400 people in the Shaw Centre and an additional 400 people online. It was planned to the moment and included impressive and inspirational speakers.

Wendy Jocko shared a beautiful blessing and land acknowledgement to start the event. Cathy Priestman was the MC and took a moment from the podium to try and capture the scale of the event with a selfie with the audience... 1400 people and of course someone had their eyes closed but there was no time for a retake because the program was packed with speeches, presentations, and awards.



The Honourable Rebecca Patterson, Senator for Ontario gave the keynote presentation. She spoke from the heart and shared her passions for women in the industry. She thanked her daughters for attending with her and thanked the audience for being so inspirational to the next generation.

Lorraine Ben, Chief Executive of Lockheed Martin Canada and Francesco Norante, CEO Of Leonardo North America both took to the podium along with patron sponsor Christina Hammond, Director of Supply Chain at General Dynamics. The sponsors were well represented, and the participants were very grateful for their contributions.

Julia Scouten, the President of WiDS, is only one year into her term and we cannot wait to see what she and her amazing team come up with for next years 20th anniversary! The WiDS executive team is skilled, powerful, and impressive – it's going to be a great year for them.





International Women's Day at Carling Campus

Thank you to the organizers of the DND Carling Campus International Women's Day event. It was an honour to be invited to participate with so many impressive organizations!

CANSOFCOM had a super-cool table showcasing several pieces of exciting equipment. There was an interesting display explaining new uniform trials, including a variety of sizes of Kevlar® inserts for flack vests!

We met up with members of Team Rubicon Canada, Women Warriors' Healing Garden, WiDS Canada, True Patriot Love Foundation, and more! We spoke with several serving members and look forward to returning next year!



Nichola Goddard Round Table

True Patriot Love Foundation hosted the Captain Nichola Goddard Women in Leadership Series event at the National Arts Centre on 19 March 2024.

The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister for Veterans Affairs Canada moderated the event. Over 120 people attended to listen to a panel including MGen Jamie Speiser-Blanchet, CWO Sandra Bouchard and LCol (Ret'd) Cybèle Wilson. Kate Goddard, Nichola's sister, also spoke and she read an excerpt from one of Nichola's letters home.

Thank you to True Patriot Love for keeping Nichola's legacy alive.



**TRUE PATRIOT
LOVE**

CANADA'S FOUNDATION FOR
THE MILITARY COMMUNITY



Registration Now Open!

Online registration is now open for the following Pepper Pod programs:

- Lifeshop™ I
- Lifeshop™ II
- National Pepper Pod Picnic Day

We're pleased to be offering Lifeshops™ in the following locations within the next year (2024/25):

- Gagetown (English) – in Fredericton
- Montreal/Quebec City (French) – at the Pepper Pod
- Ottawa (English) – at the Pepper Pod
- Ottawa (French) – at the Pepper Pod
- Petawawa/ North Bay (English) – at the Pepper Pod
- Kingston/ Trenton (English) – at the Pepper Pod
- Borden (English) – at the Pepper Pod
- Comox/ Esquimalt (English) - on Vancouver Island

We are only opening registration for these locations now because we will be serving these locations in the next 12 months. Opening additional locations will result in women registering and then waiting for over a year to attend. We plan to host additional sessions in the future, and we'll open registration for those places when the Lifeshops™ are scheduled and become available.

Please note that we anticipate still having wait lists for some areas of the country and we appreciate your patience while we work to serve as many women as possible.

Go to pepperpod.ca to register and join us!



No Agenda Weekend

Thank you to everyone who attended the No Agenda Weekend this month! It was a nice opportunity to decompress, connect and be cozy. Thank you for being part of the Pepper Pod forest and we look forward to your next visit.



Spring Work Party

Grab your boots and roll up your plaid sleeves— It's almost time for the Pepper Pod Spring Work Party!

- **Sunday, 21 April 2024**
10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Maintaining the Pepper Pod is an ongoing task and thankfully, we have a dedicated group of volunteers who join us for Work Parties.

Sometimes outside, sometimes inside, volunteers are the backbone of the Pepper Pod and we greatly appreciate the assistance. Together, we organize, repair, paint, tidy, and prepare the inside of the centre. Outside we chop and stack wood for the fire pits, prune plants, trim trees, tidy the grounds, prep the area for the next season and much more.

Registration opens soon. 😊



Lifeshop™ Grad in Action

Kathy Litalien, a Pepper Pod Lifeshop™ Grad, recently began a new chapter in her career as an entrepreneur, when she launched several franchise territories for Nurse Next Door (NND), a home health care company. NND is a globally admired brand that helps seniors retain their independence and age happier at home. Kathy's territories include the underserved rural communities of eastern Ontario and Prince Edward County, as well as Belleville and Trenton.

Kathy's previous careers included being a graduate of CMR/RMC and then a Logistics Army Officer serving in Gagetown and Rwanda. She then did an MBA in France, worked as a marketing leader, and progressing to a sales leader at Procter & Gamble in Geneva, Morocco and Toronto. Then she reinvented herself again as a Commercial Banker and Senior Operations Leader at RBC.

Now the franchise owner of four Nurse Next Door territories, Kathy's vision is to become an employer of choice. She plans to provide much-needed health care services in rural areas, while building a rock-solid team of care providers in the region.



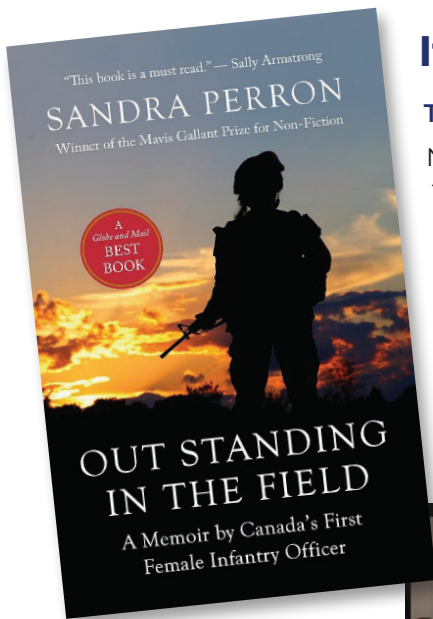
Kathy Litalien

Franchise Owner

Nurse Next Door

Kathy.Litalien@NurseNextDoor.com

NurseNextDoor.com



It's Getting Real!

This beautiful soul is Nina Kiri.

Nina was a six-month-old baby in the former Yugoslavia while I was peacekeeping there in 1993 and now she will be playing me in the movie adaptation of *Out Standing in the Field!*

Filming starts in two weeks, so she's busy learning her lines and doing chin-ups! I am so excited about the all-women crew that will be filming this production!

Merci Marcel Giroux and Martine Pagé at GPA FILMS and Julia Rosenberg from January Films for putting together such a talent-filled dream team, with Mélanie Charbonneau in the driver's seat!

Sandra



Pepper Pod Picnic Day

The Pepper Pod community spans across Canada with Lifeshop™ tribes located in many provinces. Although the physical Pepper Pod building is located in Chelsea, our hearts are with all of our grads and we'd love to get together again!

Wherever you are, gather your Lifeshop™ tribe for a picnic on Sunday, 9 June 2024—the second annual National Pepper Pod Picnic Day! A huge shout out to Ann Arsenault, from the Cheeky Peppers, who suggested the awesome idea of a giant picnic.



For Lifeshop™ Tribes Across Canada

Find a nice park, field, backyard, dock, treehouse, any perfect place for a picnic and collect your peeps. Consider sharing the love and inviting a nearby Lifeshop™ tribe to join you. For every remote Lifeshop™ tribe, please have one representative register for the picnic so we can send you the picnic kit.

On 9 June, be sure to take photos, tell tales and share them with us! We'll post photos of Lifeshop™ tribes all across the country on our Facebook and Instagram feeds!

For Everyone in the Ottawa/ Gatineau Region

The Pepper Pod team invites everybody in the Ottawa/Gatineau area to join us at Lac Leamy at 11:00 am on Sunday, 9 June 2024.

Haven't done a Lifeshop™ yet?

No problem, the Ottawa/Gatineau gathering is for everyone.

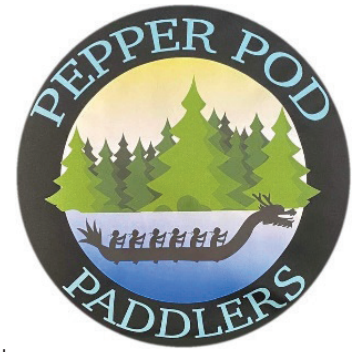
The picnic is free to attend, and we ask that you register in advance to help with planning. Please bring a dish to share and talk amongst yourselves to avoid being buried in potato salad! (Unless, of course, you like that sort of thing.)

For more info and to register, check out our website:

<https://pepperpod.ca/event-calendar/national-pepper-pod-picnic-day/#register>



Dragon Boat Team Registration Opens – 15 April 2024



Tim Horton's Dragon Boat Festival

- 21-23 June 2024
Mooney's Bay Beach in Ottawa

We have an exciting year planned for the Pepper Pod Paddlers! We have a good chance at getting an excellent tent location because we were one of the first five teams registered. The boat has been reserved, the practice schedule is being finalized and Meghan, our incredible coach from last year, has agreed to return!

Registration opens for everyone on the Pepper Pod website on Monday, **15 April 2024.**

We're looking for:

- Paddlers (20 + 4 spares) for 6 x practices plus Saturday & Sunday of the Festival
- Support Team (4) for a half-day shift on Saturday or Sunday
- Set-Up Crew (4) for one-time set-up of the tent on Friday

No experience is necessary, and we are working on an optional pre-practice exercise plan to help the team get ready.

Practice dates have been requested but are not firm yet. They will take place on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at Rideau Canoe Club (804 Hog's Back Rd, Ottawa). Practice times = TBC.

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| • Tuesday, 4 June | • Thursday, 13 June |
| • Thursday, 6 June | • Tuesday, 18 June |
| • Tuesday, 11 June | • Thursday, 20 June |

Paddles up!



UPCOMING AT THE PEPPER POD

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 12-14 Apr | Lifeshop™ I in Edmonton (English) (FULL) |
| 12-14 Apr | No Agenda Weekend @The Pepper Pod (FULL) |
| 15 Apr | Beyond Trauma in Edmonton (English) |
| 15 Apr | Dragon Boat Team Registration Opens |
| 21 Apr | Spring Work Party @The Pepper Pod |
| 26-28 Apr | Lifeshop™ I (Ottawa/Gatineau) in English @The Pepper Pod (FULL) |
| June | 6 x Dragon Boat Practices (dates TBC) |
| 9 Jun | National Pepper Pod Picnic Day! |
| 21-23 Jun | Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival |
| 6 Jul | SUP Ladies?! Stand Up Paddleboarding at Meech Lake |



If you'd like to learn more about the Pepper Pod, visit our website at www.PepperPod.ca

Instagram - https://www.instagram.com/le_thepepperpod/

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/pepperpod.ca>

LinkedIn - <https://www.linkedin.com/company/pepper-pod/>

Long live strong women!

Lifeshop

testimonials

"I love my new tribe.
They are my sisters now."

témoignages

« Les membres de mon groupe sont
devenues comme des sœurs. »



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.

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Centre de ressourcement des vétérans
Retreat Centre for Women Veterans