

PEPPER POD

SitRep



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New Lifeshop™ Tribe

Welcome to the new tribe from Ottawa. I continue to feel like I am the luckiest woman in the world to be able to spend weekends with such inspirational women. Another retreat filled with sharing and caring. synergy and energy, hugs and more hugs. This is the last Lifeshop until the fall, and I will positively miss the energy of women being their strong, vulnerable selves in our safe space. Luckily, we have plenty of other activities all through the summer, so I won't have to be in withdrawal for very long!

Sandra

Strong Women!

Road trip! One of the Ottawa tribes recently hit the road for a day in the sunshine. They met for lunch and a whole lot of wood splitting. It's amazing how much wood can be chopped with a determined crew of this size!



(If you have updates you'd like to share from your tribe, send an email - Cathy@PepperPod.ca)

Your Gift of Service

Several long-time Pepper Pod volunteers were recognized this month at the Spring Work Party. They consistently show up with gloves, rakes, and their warmest smile. They also participate regularly, lead Pepper Pod events, take on tasks, and contribute to the overall Pepper Pod community.

They were awarded the Pepper Pod coin for being such precious parts of our forest, helping us lean on them to keep the Pepper Pod Retreat Centre looking its magnificent self. We feel much gratitude for their presence, their help and their commitment to the Pepper Pod.

Thank you, beautiful souls!



Ann Arsenault



Bianca "Bibi" Vachon



Chantal Charron and René Robichaud



Nancy and Shane Livingstone





Veteran Society Motorcycle Club Makes ANOTHER Donation!

This group of caring and generous veterans surprised the Pepper Pod with another donation during the Spring Work Party. The Veteran Society Motorcycle Club – Section YGGDRASIL donated to the Pepper Pod last year and has also supported Perley Health for years.

They share their time and muscle at work parties and so generously give funds raised during dart tournaments and gaming events. We are grateful for this relationship and are pleased to have them as members of the Pepper Pod forest.

Rainbow Veterans of Canada Receive Heraldic Badge

Congratulations to the Rainbow Veterans of Canada!

They celebrated an historic milestone on April 19th when Governor General Mary Simon, unveiled the first-ever heraldic badge for the Rainbow Veterans of Canada.



"You have made so much progress to ensure members of the 2SLGBTQI+ community can serve with pride in the Canadian Armed Forces. You have brought recognition, respect and support to LGBT Purge survivors and to the CAF veterans who identify as 2SLGBTQI+."

This heraldic badge symbolizes the resilience and strength of your community and recognizes your journey to achieve inclusion. It is a testament to your work in education, outreach and advocacy."

*Her Excellency The Right Honourable Mary Simon,
Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada.*

You can learn more about the Rainbow Veterans or Canada on their website: <https://rainbowveterans.ca/>



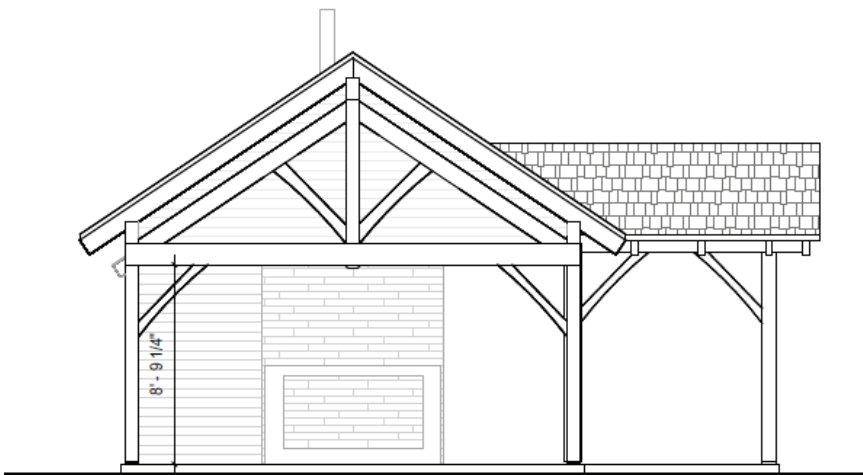
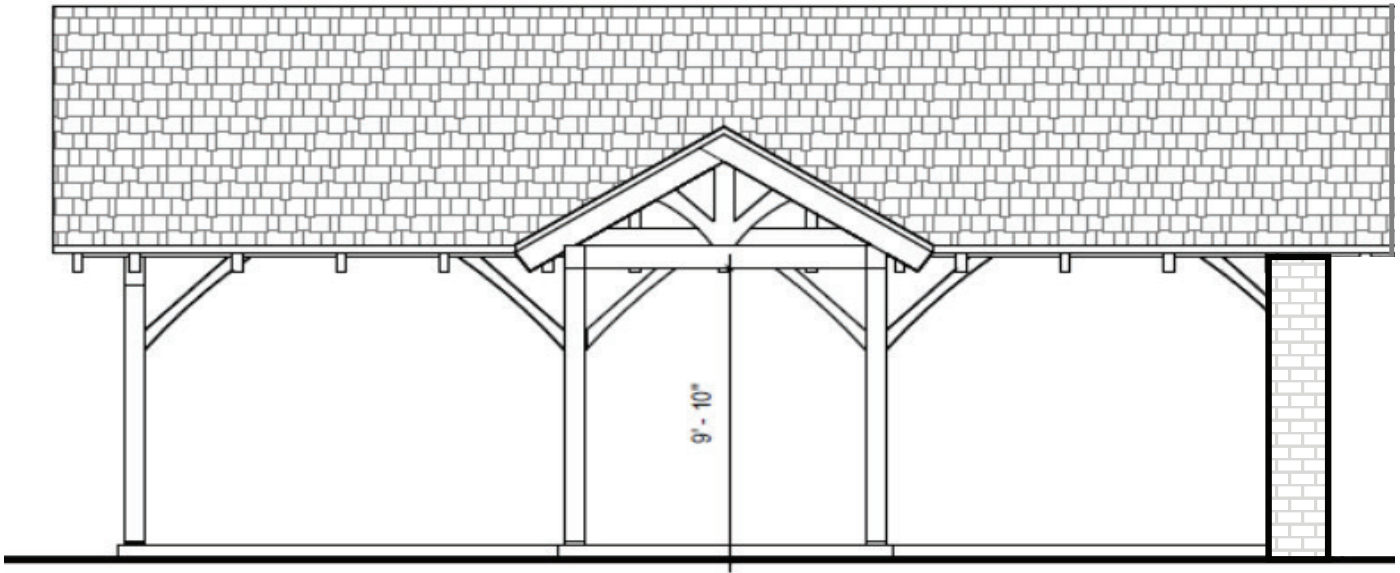
Two of Sandra's happy places: HomeSense and Tanks!



Outdoor Classroom Update

Groundbreaking is just around the corner for the Pepper Pod's new outdoor classroom, and it's going to be huge! Soon our wellness workshops, Dragon boat dry land training, perhaps a little yoga and Lifeshop 2 participants will all be sheltered under the 18' canopy of a timber frame gazebo. Surrounded by the lush maple and oak trees, it will feel like being in the forest. Oh yeah, WE WILL BE!

Thank you to the **Canadian Legacy Project**, the **Leacross Foundation**, **Boeing Canada**, and the **Royal Canadian Naval Benevolent Fund** for making this possible. We are going to make magic in that classroom!



The She Shed Pepperettes!

During the Spring Work Party we had a crew of young women, all daughters of veterans, forge a new group at the Pepper Pod. "The Pepperettes" ranged in age from 9 years old to 18 years old and they took over the responsibility of the She Shed.

Under the guidance of Chelsea Poole, the Pepperettes took inventory, priced new items, refreshed displays, ran the cash, greeted customers and created a wonderful vibe in the space. We look forward to the next time we can get this crew of talented young women together!



Registration Now Open

Online registration is now open for the Pepper Pod programs listed below.

- Lifeshop™ I
- Lifeshop™ II
- Dragon Boat Team (open until 3 May)
- National Pepper Pod Picnic Day (open until 10 May)
- SUP Ladies – Stand Up Paddleboarding

We'll 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

The Pepper Pod has several waitlists across Canada, and because we don't want women to wait indefinitely, we are only opening registration for these locations at this time. We plan to host additional sessions in the future, and we'll open registration for those locations once the Lifeshops™ are scheduled.

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 for all of the activities listed above!

Legion Executive Visit

The Pepper Pod welcomed members from the Legion Dominion Executive Council (DEC) and the Provincial Executive Directors for a visit on April 25th and it felt like welcoming a family home.

The bus of about 40 visitors arrived at the end of the driveway and that's where the fun began followed by coffee, tours, questions, briefings, videos... We covered a lot in just 2 hours!

It was an honour to have been included in the busy schedule for this generous group of volunteers. They reinforced the need for the Pepper Pod, expressed support and will be helping to share and grow the Pepper Pod forest across the country.



Spring Work Party

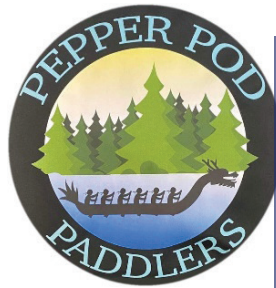
WOW! Our biggest work party yet.

This was the biggest work party yet! On Sunday, April 21st, the Pepper Pod was supported by 58 incredible, caring and hard-working people. Mulch was moved, leaves were raked, wood was split – the effort was monumental.

Thank you to everyone who helped get the centre ready for spring. Without you, we could not operate, and we are profoundly grateful.



Dragon Boat Team Registration



Registration for the Dragon Boat Team will remain open until Friday, May 3, 2024.

Your Pepper Pod team is looking for:

- Paddlers (20 + 4 spares)
- Support Team (4) ½ day shift on Sat or Sun
- Set-Up Crew (4) One-time set-up of the tent.

No experience is necessary, and there will be an optional pre-practice exercise plan to help the team get ready. An exciting dryland welcome session will be held at the Pepper Pod on 5 May. We'll introduce everyone and firm up the team. Supporters and set-up crew are welcome to attend the dryland meeting too... even if you are not paddling, you are part of the team!

Key dates for the season:

- 3 May Registration Closes
- 5 May Dryland Welcome Meeting at the Pepper Pod (2:00 pm)
- 4 Jun Practice – 6:15 pm at the Rideau Canoe Club
- 6 Jun Practice – 6:15 pm at the Rideau Canoe Club
- 11 Jun Practice – 6:15 pm at the Rideau Canoe Club
- 13 Jun Practice – 6:15 pm at the Rideau Canoe Club
- 18 Jun Practice – 6:15 pm at the Rideau Canoe Club
- 20 Jun Practice – 6:15 pm at the Rideau Canoe Club
- 22 Jun Race Day #1
- 23 Jun Race Day #2... and awards 😊

Practice will be Tuesdays & Thursdays evenings (6:15 pm) at Rideau Canoe Club - 804 Hog's Back Rd, Ottawa. Please arrive 20 minutes early to get paddles, life jackets and warm-up.

Paddles up!



No Agenda Weekend - *kinda*

For a group that was supposed to have “no agenda” this crew did not sit very still!

Yes, they had a campfire. Yes, they read. Yes, they chatted. ... AND they also conducted a focus group, tidied the She Shed, connected with vendors, ordered new stock, and, and, and... and they had fun.

Thanks for your help. It was great to welcome you to the Pepper Pod.





Pepper Pod Strategic Planning

Whenever Sandra takes a few days off, we always need to schedule a strategic planning session afterwards to plan and schedule everything she's dreamed up during her break. This time, it was a homelessness project, a ribbon cutting for the new outdoor classroom, and a special secret event for the première of the film Out Standing.

It's obvious the team will be growing with all these fun projects in the works, but the good news is that our superpower is attracting good people, awesome partners, and dedicated volunteers.

Love that vibe!

National Pepper Pod Picnic Day!



Register your LIFESHOP™ TRIBE by 10 May 2024 if you'd like to receive a Picnic Kit.

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, June 9th 2024 — the second National Pepper Pod Picnic Day! Thank you again to Versatil Inc. for sponsoring this event.

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, June 9th 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 with everyone.

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

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

Lifeshop™ Grad in Action

Trailblazing Towards Equality: Camp Courage's Inspiring Journey"

Camp Courage stands as a beacon of hope, offering a transformative experience that ignites passion and curiosity among underrepresented youth. Through immersive engagement, education, and empowerment, our nine-day program for 24 female and gender-diverse youth aged 15-19 fosters growth in a nurturing environment. Guided by 60 professionals from diverse emergency service agencies, participants emerge with expanded horizons and a deep sense of confidence. They gain practical skills, but more importantly, they embody inner strength and resilience—an 'I can do anything' mindset.

Graduates receive access to educational resources, bursaries, and mentorship programs, preparing them for careers in emergency services. Remarkably, 36% of our graduates find themselves in roles as firefighters, paramedics, police officers, military personnel and more—becoming catalysts for progress in their communities. Many become advocates for important causes such as suicide prevention and women's safety, while also assuming leadership roles and championing change.

As Camp Courage expands across Canada and beyond, our impact continues to grow. Graduates return as mentors, passing down our principles and creating a supportive community. If you're ready to embrace diversity, empowerment, and excellence in your emergency services and community, visit them online or reach out to **Andréa Speranza**, Operations Fire Captain, Founder/Executive Director of Camp Courage and **Pepper Pod Lifeshop Graduate**.

Remember, there's no shortage of potential — just the need for appropriate encouragement and support.

Andréa Speranza
Founder/Executive Director
Camp Courage

<https://campcourage.ca/>



HIGHLIGHTING OUR PARTNERS



ROYAL CANADIAN NAVAL BENEVOLENT FUND

Imagine our surprise, when the Pepper Pod was contacted by the Royal Canadian Benevolent Fund wanting to learn more about services and support to veterans. After a warm and engaging exchange the Pepper Pod was invited to submit a proposal and the Royal Canadian Benevolent Fund generously agreed to help support the construction of the outdoor classroom. Thank you!



VETERAN SOCIETY MOTORCYCLE CLUB – SECTION YGGDRASIL

This generous motorcycle club has been friends with the Pepper Pod for over a year. Their club is mostly veterans and they connect and check-in with each other regularly. They have made two donations to the Pepper Pod over the year and they also support Perley Health. Funds are raised through special events, online events and dart tournaments. We are very grateful for the generosity of this strong group of veterans and we love it when they come to visit!

UPCOMING AT THE PEPPER POD

30 Apr	SMSRC Counsellors visit the Pepper Pod
2 May	True Patriot Love Foundation visits the Pepper Pod
3 May	Commissionaires National Office visits the Pepper Pod
5 May	Dragon Boat Dryland Welcome Meeting
14 May	General Dynamics Work Party
15 May	Beyond Trauma
4 Jun	Dragon Boat Practice
6 Jun	Dragon Boat Practice
9 Jun	National Pepper Pod Picnic Day!
11 Jun	Dragon Boat Practice
13 Jun	Dragon Boat Practice
15 Jun	Navy Bike Ride & 5 km Run
18 Jun	Dragon Boat Practice
20 Jun	Dragon Boat Practice
21-23 Jun	Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival – Race Weekend
6 Jul	SUP Ladies?! Stand Up Paddleboarding at Meech Lake
23 Aug	Women's Wellness Day
22 Sep	Army Run



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!



Congratulations to Cher Lyn (Lifeshop™ grad) and Mike Cameron for their new baby Pepper Podder!

That baby boy is going to be so loved!

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.

LE / THE
PEPPER POD
Centre de ressourcement des vétéranes
Retreat Centre for Women Veterans