

SHARON HAPTON, FOUNDER and CEO, SOUP SISTERS

Founded in Calgary, Alberta on March 3, 2009, Soup Sisters was the inspirational vision of the driven and dynamic Sharon Hapton. A private sector entrepreneur and a soup maker for all of her life.

In 2008-2009, over the course of the year leading up to her 50th birthday, Sharon was ruminating on how to turn her heartfelt belief in the healing power of homemade soup into an action plan to help women in crisis. These unrelenting thoughts were compounded by her new status as an empty nester when, in her words, "I found myself in the most giant nurture void of my life."

She could have floundered and indulged in sadness but that isn't how Sharon leads her life. She fine-tuned her ruminations into a full-blown operational plan and founded Soup Sisters, a new outlet for her nurturing spirit and a grassroots organization that would engage thousands in the movement to help victims of domestic and family violence.

In the past ten years, Soup Sisters and Broth Brothers has grown to 27 cities across Canada and launched into the US. Each location is run by local volunteers in their own community. That is the simplicity of Sharon's vision: to give people a way to give back to their community by doing something tangible - getting into the kitchen, spending a night with friends, rolling up their sleeves and creating something heart warming, heartfelt and with it a message of support to women and kids in crisis.

Sharon received the Global Television and YWCA Women of Vision award in February 2011 and was honoured nationally by Chatelaine Magazine as Everyday Hero and Woman of the Year. She was profiled as Global Television's Everyday Hero, CTV's Inspired and her soup social enterprise was featured in Women of Influence Magazine. Sharon has received the Meritorious Service Medal, by the Governor General of Canada on behalf of the Queen for bringing honour to Canada through performing exceptional deeds.

Today thousands of community people are coming together across Canada to produce over 15,000 servings of fresh and delicious soups for women, children and youth each month. Since March of 2009, more than 2 million servings of soup have been delivered to shelters nationwide, and there is a growing network of over 50,000 Soup Sisters and Broth Brothers participants across the country. Special initiatives continue to evolve and expand the mandate to provide a 'hug in a bowl'. Soup for Syrians, Souper Kids, Chicken Noodle Day, Summer Stock, Senior Sisters, Soup Sisters POP-UP events, MISO, Money In Soup Out, National Soup it Forward day, and our own retail fresh soup *cause brand*.

It is our belief that wherever there is an emergency shelter for women, children and youth in communities large and small, there should be a Soup Sisters chapter to provide the comfort and moral support that soup and the people who volunteer to make it offer to families seeking a life free of domestic violence.

With its unique blend of providing cooking fun, making a tangible difference through a simple gesture and choosing an issue that profoundly touches all communities the Soup Sisters and Broth Brothers concept has fired the imagination of thousands of volunteers and dozens of chefs across the country. It has also amplified the ways in which corporations have been able to be involved in this vitally important but thorny issue that affects our communities' social and economic well-being.

We know through experience that not only do the donations of soup provide comfort and sustenance to our target populations, the monthly donations of several-hundred servings of nutritious soup cut operating costs for the recipient Emergency Shelters by 18-20%. Those freed-up resources are re-allocated to much-needed programming aimed at getting families back on their feet and focused on building a healthy and stable future.

Sometimes the smallest gestures at the right time can have the most meaningful impact. The women and mothers we serve have often spent years as victims of abuse and isolation and suffer from very low self-esteem and confidence. Coordinators from the Shelters often attest that with the monthly donations of soup, these women say they feel supported and nourished by their community during their time of healing and this aids in improving self-esteem.

‘Creating a stir’ in communities across the country Soup Sisters and Broth Brothers has delivered over 2 million servings of nourishing and nurturing soup nationwide to women’s shelters and youth crisis centers. Our *‘hug in a bowl.’*

Soup Sisters and Broth Brothers are year-round programs that allow community people across the country to transform their contributions into a meaningful experience and a tangible way to give. Each individual pays to participate and gives three hours of their personal time to make soup for women’s and youth shelters. The fee covers the use of a commercial kitchen, supervision, purchasing/ensuring the finest ingredients, and culminates with a soup supper. The volunteer participants learn cooking skills along with the cold hard facts about the prevalence of domestic abuse from a local shelter speaker who addresses each group. Events are social, dynamic and collaborative, and go beyond traditional philanthropic models of giving; with Soup Sisters, people donate their time, energy, and cooking skills in order to create something tangible to give back to the community.

“People are looking for a hands-on way to contribute within a manageable timeframe. When they see the impact of just one evening of working together as a team -- all those litres of hearty soup -- they know they’ve made a tangible difference in people’s lives.” -Sharon Hapton, Founder and CEO, Soup Sisters and Broth Brothers



On May 18, 2014 the Inaugural LA Soup Sisters and Broth Brothers gathered to prepare over 160 servings of the first ever batch of home-made, and delicious soup lovingly prepared in the USA!

