



The message that goes with the soup is that we stand with you, we care and you matter.

"The majority of young people at The Doorway are food insecure. Soup Sisters freezer full of soup gives our young people the security of knowing there is always a big, hearty, healthy meal for them.

They are very grateful for the food hampers they receive from other services, but food hampers often lack nutrients and can't meet food preferences and dietary needs. Soup Sisters ensures their soups are loaded with vegetables and protein. It fills their hearts and their bellies."

One phone call, 14 years plus thousands of servings of soup total a heartwarming partnership between two charities. Serving hugs-in-a-bowl to youth in crisis and experiencing homelessness, Soup Sisters and The Doorway have come together in the spirit of compassion and collaboration.

Every week, purposely made fresh and nutritious soups **made by the community** arrive to stock the freezer of this Calgary agency. Their favourites are: Chunky Chicken Creole, Brenda's Chili, Broccoli Cheddar, Potato, Bacon and Cheese, and Hamburger Soup to name a few.

The young people who come through the doors know this is for them. Made with love, completely free, with no strings attached.

The Doorway is a community supporting young people choosing to leave street life, restoring trust so they can reintegrate into mainstream society. A safe place to go where they learn they have the power in themselves to make different choices, where they are understood and cared about.

"The concept is so straightforward. A hug in a bowl, feeding bodies and fueling minds. Anything brilliant is simple," says Marilyn Dyck co-founder and former Executive Director of the Doorway and the passion behind the organization and the partnership. "I just knew when Sharon phoned with this wonderful idea of caring for others through nutritious soup that this was for our youth. After that first call, our lobby had a freezer full of this amazing quality food. And the effects were immediate – our youth were delighted to have good food they could enjoy right away or take with them. Good food they didn't have to steal."

Jeremiah, one of the young people, said in a thank you note, "I don't have a lot of money in my life right now and your soup gives me the opportunity to eat healthy for free. You really make a difference in my eating, life and others too. God bless you all and thanks for satisfying my taste buds."

When Soup Sisters' founder and CEO, Sharon Hapton, learned about this organization, she was struck by the incredible kindness and caring for these young souls. It was something she had to be a part of, changing lives. "I just knew I had to help. Soup is what I love, it's what I make, it's my way of taking care of others," says Sharon. "People thrive when they are respected. I have seen it over and over. When vulnerable citizens receive a warm, delicious and filling bowl of soup, they marvel that something this good was made for them. This simple exchange – a moment of shared humanity – is incredibly powerful. Soup may not change all that is bad in their world, but it's a good start."

Youth that come to the Doorway are looking for a fresh start. Sometimes, it just starts with an idea in a safe space over a warm bowl of this universal comfort food. "It was wonderful to see how soup could initiate conversations. The dignity of gathering around a meal is powerful, especially for these young people who have felt rejected and discarded," adds Marilyn. Together, they proved that a warm meal, a little friendship and a lot of understanding could work wonders in the trajectory of these young lives.

And so, the story of Soup Sisters and The Doorway continues, a testament to the incredible things that happen when kind hearts and good food come together. Each hearty bowl of soup they shared was a reminder that, even in the face of adversity, compassion could be the warmest hug of all.

I was walking to The Door way today Not exactly feeling good. I had somehow gotten a pretty bad cold within the last few days. My head was feeling really stuffy and congested. So you could imagine my surprise when I opened the freeze and saw it stock full of a really good looking chicken noodle soup. Needless to say I was really in need of some homemade chicken noodle soup (I always eat it when I feel ill grandmothers advice.) Anyways I start digging in and it was just so good. It eased the tingle in my throat and seemed to clear up my sinuses a bit. So to those of you who had a hand in the making of this wonderful chicken noodle soup I thank you so much it made my day cause it didn't come from a can but was homemade and oh so good. Thank you

Justin Kenney.