

Soup Sisters? The Big Stir provides soup for those in need in community



By Brian Lockhart

Stirring a big pot of hot soup may never be more satisfying than knowing the results of your hard work will be going to someone who really appreciates it.

The Soup Sisters is a group that was established in Calgary in 2009 and now has chapters across both Canada and the U.S. and provides nutritious meals to people in crisis.

The local chapter of Soup Sisters hosted a special event on Sunday, March 3, called The Big Stir to bring local residents together for a day of soup making that will benefit four non-profit organizations.

Almost 100 people turned out for three separate cooking times to make soup for Family Transition Place, Choices Youth Shelter, the Orangeville Food Bank, and The Lighthouse – all local organizations that help people in crisis or need some temporary help getting food.

The Soup Sisters in Orangeville have been doing their cooking for three years supplying Family Transition Place but in this event they wanted to turn it up a notch and help supply the three other important organizations in town.

The Big Stir was held at the Community Living Dufferin building on County Road 3.

Stacy Tarrant, manger of development and community relations at Family Transition Place, said having a place to stay and something good to eat is an important step for someone in crisis.

“We had a woman come in (to the shelter) during the middle of the night with just the clothes on her back,” Tarrant said. “She was full of humbleness and gratefulness just to have something good to eat.” In this case it was soup provided by the Soup Sisters. “Good nutrition is a part of healing. We are a place of hope and new beginnings.”

“It’s national Soup it Forward day because today is the Founder’s birthday,” explained Soup Sisters volunteer coordinator Lori Robertshaw. “Soup Sisters is across Canada – we’re 30 chapters strong. It was founded in 2009 in Calgary. The money that they pay to register here today pays for the soup ingredients so we’re break even deal for sure. All these people that are here making soup to day pay a registration fee and that pays for the ingredients. We’re 100 per cent volunteer. For national Soup it Forward day this is how we decided we were going to celebrate it. We have around 100 people coming together. We did three cooking sessions today. Normally we do this every month as Soup Sisters but this is The Big Stir so this was 100 people all in day and we had four

recipients. Normally we do it for women and children in crisis and youth. That's how it all started. Family Transition Place, the women's shelter here in Orangeville has been accepting our donations for three years. We deliver soup to them every month. It's all about coming together and making nourishing and nutritious homemade for women and children in crisis.?

Participants can register on-line to take part.

?We are the smallest chapter but we are all about quantity and quality,? Ms. Robertshaw said. ?This morning we made 82 litres, so by noon we had 600 servings made. On average we make 80 litres per month and our goal today is 250.?

The results of the group's effort will bring some comfort to people in crisis when they need it.