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★ **Soupergirl flies into Takoma**

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Missy Frederick

Staff Reporter - *Washington Business Journal*

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Sara Polon's vegan soups are so popular, she's managed to build a three-year business out of selling them, primarily through delivery and occasionally through area farmer's markets. Now, the self-proclaimed Soupergirl has snagged a retail space to further expand her sales of such dishes as Jamaican Me Crazy Sweet Potato Soup.

The Soupergirl store, in the former location of Blue Lotus Treasures at 314 Carroll St. NW in the Takoma neighborhood of D.C., is scheduled for a Sept. 7 opening. Polon originally wasn't interested in a retail space but was approached directly by the building's landlord.

"At first I said, 'No, we just aren't interested in retail,' but he was very patient and kind and really worked with us to make us work," Polon said. Polon's original plan was to invest in her own industrial kitchen space, and the new spot allows her to do that while providing a place to sell food.

Polon sells soup each week to about 200 customers who have found her mostly through word of mouth. She declined to disclose how much she is investing in the retail store but said it is "very significant." The store will have an industrial feel, with high ceilings and warm, dark colors.

Soupergirl's soups have built a reputation on its local ingredients, low sodium content and fun names. One customer tells her she's lost 25 pounds eating the soups for lunch; Polon herself is down 15 pounds since starting the business, but she suspects the constant running around has also played a role.

The store will offer soups and grain salads, as well as sides and beverages.

"It's really an experiment for us, and we're excited about it," she said. The next potential experiment for the company? Polon is toying with the idea of starting a food truck.