



Sara Polon aka Soupergirl

What does a stand-up comedian who has a degree in American History from the University of Pennsylvania do for a second act? Make soup! Inspired by Michael Pollan's *Omnivore's Dilemma*, Sara Polon, aka Soupergirl, is bringing delicious and healthy eating to Washingtonians one bowl of soup at a time. A Washington, DC area native and all around funny gal, she is the creative founder of Soupergirl, DC's local soup company. Winner of the DC Affinity Lab/William James Foundation 2009 Socially Responsible Business Plan competition, Polon is an aspiring addition to the growing trend of young, community-centric entrepreneurs passionate about "doing well by doing good." She is changing the way DC's power players and Washington denizens eat.

Polon followed an unconventional path to transforming Washingtonians' palates. After graduating from college, she found herself searching for a career that she would find inspiring and purposeful. She explored various professions, including performing stand-up comedy in Manhattan's most popular clubs. Yet something was always missing. Her "ah ha" moment came as she was reading *Omnivore's Dilemma*, which forever changed her life. A lifelong healthy eater with a passion for food and the desire to blaze her own trail, Pollan's book provided the spark that inspired Polon to combine her love of food and comedy. Polon's mom, aka Soupermom, also played a pivotal role. A master in the Polon family kitchen, her homemade soups based on traditional family recipes, were an especially tasty highlight at the dinner table. It only made sense for Polon to turn to her mom to help launch Soupergirl and its mouthwatering and memorable soups.

Soupergirl's soups are a fusion of modern flavors and old fashioned cooking techniques that highlight seasonal, fresh ingredients from local farmers and producers. Each batch is cooked slowly, from scratch and with love. While she channels her comedic instincts into many aspects of Soupergirl, including the humorous names and descriptions of each menu item, her commitment to producing healthy, delicious, and seasonal soups is serious. She sources her produce from local farmers who follow responsible and sustainable growing methods. Often, simple chats with these farmers about what's growing sparks an idea which Soupermom transforms into the unique and distinctive selections that make up the evolving and entertaining menu. A vegetarian since 2002, all of Soupergirl's soups are vegan and certified kosher, a nod to Polon's Jewish upbringing.

Soupergirl's creative offerings include: *Souperpapa's Papa Al Pomodoro Soup* with tomatoes, basil, garlic and olive oil; *Sing a Song About Watermelon Gazpacho* with watermelon, tomato, cucumber and jalapeno; *"Cream" of Asparagus* made with vegan-friendly cashew cream; *Harper Lee's Quinoa Vegetable Soup* with chunks of zucchini, red bell peppers, carrots, green beans, quinoa and basil; *Jamaican Me CrazySweet Potato Soup* with sweet potatoes, coconut milk, and dark rum just to name a few.

With her eco-sensibilities extending beyond gathering ingredients from local farmers, Polon is leading the way in building community and affecting change one bowl of soup at a time by practicing environmental and social responsibility both in and out of the kitchen. She uses biodegradable containers, composts all kitchen scraps and has a delivery bag recycling program in place with her customers. She also hires employees from DC Central Kitchen's Culinary Job training program and donates soup to Martha's Table.

The evolution of Soupergirl from informal tasting sessions in Polon's living room to renting kitchen space in a now-defunct Spanish restaurant to the opening of her own store is testament to Polon's dedication and passion. She and Soupergirl are proof that one can build a profitable, successful food business that remains committed to good food, community and social responsibility.