



THE “RED HAT REVOLUTION”

One of the premier women’s social organizations in the world, the Red Hat Society® based in Fullerton, CA, began with the gift of a red hat and has grown into a universal symbol for women around the globe as they victoriously celebrate turning 50 and entering into the next phase of their lives. The social message behind the first red hat has resonated with millions of women around the globe regardless of race, creed, occupation, age or socio-economic status. Today, it is commonplace to see Red Hat Society® members out frolicking and embracing life to the fullest in their now famous symbol, the “red hat.”

How it Started

In the fall of 1997, on a trip to Tucson, AZ, Sue Ellen Cooper impulsively paid \$7.50 for an old red fedora in a thrift shop. When a good friend was nearing a “fifty-ish” birthday, Sue Ellen cast about for an idea for an original gift. Inspired by a well-known poem, Warning, which begins “When I am an old woman, I shall wear purple, with a red hat which doesn’t go and doesn’t suit me.” she wanted to encourage her friend to grow older in a playful manner. She gave her friend a red hat of her own suggesting that she keep it as a reminder to grow older playfully - on her terms.

The symbolism behind the red hat had a profound impact on women Sue Ellen encountered. Those women responded by donning their own red hats and entering a new women’s movement embracing a renewed outlook on life filled with fun and friendship, fulfilling lifelong dreams.

The Red Hat Society® was born. No longer would maturing women be invisible to society. They simply are not done yet!

The Growth Explosion

The Red Hat Society® membership exploded through word of mouth, the purest form of viral marketing, growing from 2 chapters in 1999 to over 40,000 chapters worldwide within five years. Women everywhere resonated with the positive ideas of fun and friendship promoted by the Red Hat Society®, and they were not about to be left out!

The Society quickly became the focus of major publications, ten books (one of which reaching the New York Times Best Sellers list,) television and other media, in addition to having the Red Hat Society® brand appear on a myriad of products. From Macy’s to WalMart, the Red Hat Society’s world famous brand was everywhere.

The Society was the focal point of the musical HATS! that was launched in 2006 and continues to be performed today. They were recognized with an award by the Pop Culture Association and American Culture Association in 2008. Pop Culture status was truly achieved when the Red Hat Society® was the focus of an episode on the longest running animated series, The Simpsons, in which Marge Simpson joins a local Red Hat Society® chapter.



The Red Hat Society® Moving Forward

With chapters around the globe, the Red Hat Society® stresses the things that all women have in common in relation to their life experiences. They reach out, with red-gloved hands, to invite all women to join with them on their march to (tongue-in-cheek) take over the world!

They have become their own women's movement – not strident, not angry – with a strong emphasis on the positive aspects of life, stressing the importance of friendship and sisterhood, the value of play, and a determination to find the good in life everywhere possible. They promote respect for all and the value of good will and good humor. Although their original focus was on women of 50 or older, the Red Hat Society® encourages women of any age to join (those under 50 wear pink hats until they “reduate”), emphasizing the value of cross-generational friendships and mentoring. They believe that their philosophy is ageless, and has universal appeal. They are always delighted to see mothers, their daughters and granddaughters creating their own “Red Hat Legacy” as they play together.

Today, you will find the Red Hat Society® and its members organically infused in all areas of life. From novels to a sea of Red Hatters parading in events around the world, the Red Hat has forever changed the world's view of women.



The Hat that Started the Revolution