

# From the Heart

*'Loving our clients back to living'*

## TK looks ahead to 3<sup>rd</sup> decade

**W**ith good cheer, joyful fellowship, a moving speech by long-time board member Sr. Denece Billesberger, and the sharing of a delicious cake, we celebrated our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a registered non-profit society in June.

Yes, thanks to the financial and spiritual support of our donors, sponsors, institutional backers, and government agencies, we did it! We are most grateful for having been given the opportunity to help so many women transform their lives. Our founder, the late Starr Peardon, would certainly be proud!



*Birthday party at Starr House: Much to celebrate.*

"The organization struggled in the early years to stay operational," noted TK president Brenda Beck, "but through amazing faith and perseverance, we are seeing the benefits of more stability and growth. Personally, I can hardly wait to see what the next 20 years hold for Talitha Koum, our women, their children, and our alumnae."

Beck continued, "TK would not have been able to create and sustain our family of support—where we are committed to loving our clients back to living—without our staff, volunteers, board members and community of women and children. And, so, on this special occasion, I would really like to extend a huge 'Thank You' to everyone."

As we embark on our third decade, we see great opportunities to not only walk with our clients on their journey to recovery, but also to accompany them as they (and, often, their children) reintegrate into society. Our hopes are high, but so are the stakes, and so we pray that, with your support, we will continue to be blessed with success!

## *Picturing our future success*

**By Odo Nkum  
Executive Director**

Thanks to the combined efforts of a team of dedicated staff, board members and all TK supporters, we are seeing great results in the lives of our residents.

As reported on pages 2-3, three clients graduated this summer. What's more, all three are now staff members of TK! We are looking forward to having more grads before the end of the year. In pursuit of fulfilling our mission, we are embarking on a project to raise funds, not only to sustain our regular programming but also to enhance life-skills classes for our clients and trauma-counseling training for our staff, of which most are TK grads.

Because of COVID, we have not been able to hold our annual gala—our primary fundraising event—for the past two years. Therefore, we increasingly rely on supporters such as you to help bring our hopes and dreams to reality. We are most grateful for that partnership!

What does success really look like for us? Success is seeing our women live a positive and fulfilling life with their children after addiction.

We are in our 21st year as a non-profit society, and the happy reality is that we are just getting started. As you carry TK's burden as though it was your own, know that you are fulfilling a divine mission. Thank you!

### *Talitha Koum Mission Statement*

*Talitha Koum Society is a non-profit organization empowering women with addictions to lead healthy and fulfilling lives by providing a home, a nurturing community, 12-step programming and life-skills training.*

# Three grads, three special stories

Talitha Koum celebrated a very special event on July 15—the simultaneous graduation of three clients from our spiritually rich 12-step program: Lindsay, Sandi, and Lizzie. Family, friends, staff, and board members gathered at Starr House to celebrate the occasion. At the end of an emotional and uplifting ceremony, the three agreed to share details of their amazing journey of recovery. Their thoughts follow, below.

**Question:** *Throughout this amazing journey, from the day you started to today, what do you think was the turning point for you? What was the moment the penny dropped, your eyes opened, your heart opened up? When did that happen?*



*Lindsay: To be a better mother.*

**Lindsay:** I think for me the turning point was when I gave up fighting against God's plan for me, and just started praying and praying, and through working the steps and learning about

myself and trying to see things more positively, then, all of a sudden, visits (to my child) opened up, and Mary and Kimmie were able to start taking me to Nanaimo. And so I got a whole new outlook on what I am actually, finally doing this for, which is to make myself a healthy person so that I can be a mother to my child.

**Lizzie:** My turning point was, I had done a "behaviour" and was grounded for the weekend. I was pretty angry about it, but, you know I had my grounding weekend, and took it as that. The events that happened over the

weekend were only what God could do. I had sobbed and cried and needed that time to grieve and let go of things that kept me angry, and kept me bitter, and kept me from just being the loving soul that I am.

And Kimmie came the next day and shared some pictures with me, and showed me pictures of her and I actually, in 2010, and a whole bunch of women that were at a retreat together.

***'I had sobbed and cried and needed that time to grieve and let go of things that kept me angry, and kept me bitter, and kept me from just being the loving soul that I am.'* —Lizzie**

And I remember how happy I was. And I remember my life, what it was like when I did have happiness and sobriety, and how the disconnect from God and human beings totally took away joy. And I just needed to accept that and bring it back into my life.

And so that grounding weekend turned into a healing weekend, that I was able to let go of a lot of anger and a lot of stories that I told myself that were not true.

**Sandi:** It was pivotal for me when I gained acceptance. I was struggling with communication, with communicating my words. I OD'd twice, in my addiction, so I have damage, brain damage, but it's something that I've been working on.

But for me, I was frustrated with communicating. I was frustrated because I didn't think I fit in. I didn't think I

belonged even here. I was angry, I was mad at myself. I was hurt and did the walk with Mary, and they asked me to limit my speaking, and it enabled me to gain an acceptance of myself.



*Sandi: Learning to forgive oneself.*

What happened was that, for a week, all I said was 'Yes' or 'No.' And, you know what, it just enabled me to sit back and process and actually take in what was going on around me. I wasn't able to

mask my feelings and could actually feel. It was pivotal for me.

**Question:** *So, looking back then, what was the biggest lesson that you learned or was taught to you, that you'd like to share, with other people who may be struggling with addiction, or to people who want to understand what it is like to live with addiction?*

**Sandi:** The biggest lesson I learned was to forgive myself. That was the hardest thing to do. But as a child of God, it belittles God for me not to forgive myself, because he forgives me so openly. That was a hard lesson to learn—just because I have children in addiction; my daughter is clean and sober today. My son is struggling to stay clean and sober. It was a hard road. I couldn't let go of the shame and blame until I forgave myself, right?

**Lizzie:** With me, it was not to give up, no matter how hard it gets, no matter how much you feel like giving up, don't give up, because there's always a gift in it. And who wants to have to start over?

**Lindsay:** I'd say that, you know, that there is hope. And a big thing for me was to learn how to trust God again and to realize that he has a plan for me, because when it's my plan, it doesn't work. So, just finding that Higher

***'It was pivotal for me when I gained acceptance.'* —Sandi**

Power and being reminded to pray. Mary and Odo would take me in their office and be like, "let's just pray." So, just reminding myself to "let go, let God."

**Question:** *You mentioned the word "hope," and that leads into the third question: What's your hope for the future, then? Where do you go from here?*

**Lindsay:** My hope is that I just continue doing everything I do in a day, because it makes me happy. It also has gotten my daughter back into my life, and opened up many, many doors. My hope is that I don't forget anything I learned being in the house, and that I have an amazing future ahead of me, and I'm sure that I will. And that I will be back for more help if I need it.

**Lizzie:** My hope is for the healing of my family, and whatever comes next.

I'm eager and I'm just self staying positive doing whatever comes next in my life. And I hope for good things for myself and for everyone--prosperity.



*Lizzie: Hope for healing.*

**Sandi:** My hope for the future is to continue my journey. I've already started – I did one shift already with TK, and I hope to keep growing with the girls as they come in. And I'd like to get someone to sponsor. I'd like to carry on, I'd like to keep growing.

*Today, all three of these grads are employed as supporter workers at Talitha Koum, sharing their experience and wisdom with new clients on their journey to recovery. Congratulations, ladies!*



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# Tasty doughnuts to support TK



Hiles: September campaign.

We were very pleased and quite honoured to learn that Coquitlam's newest little coffee shop/bakery, Doughnut Love, had selected Talitha Koum to be its "Charity of the Month" in September.

Doughnut Love operator Kathy Hiles says the store will donate to TK \$1 for every special TK doughnut sold throughout the month. Kathy and husband Clint Hiles opened Doughnut Love (at the northwest corner of Poirier and

Como Lake) this past June, and word spread quickly about the quality and variety of their offerings.

They make three batches of doughnuts daily—at 6 a.m., 9 a.m. and noon—and they all sell out quickly, so arrive early to get yours! See you at Doughnut Love!

## TK the focus of inspiring news story

*The Tri-Cities Dispatch*, an e-news outlet serving the Coquitlam area, published a wonderful story on Talitha Koum on July 2, marking our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The story featured inspiring interviews of society Vice President/volunteer Mary O'Neill, and TK grads/staff Terri M and Candi K.

Visit [tricitiedispatch.com](http://tricitiedispatch.com), and search "talitha" to find the story!



Terri (l) and Candi: Telling the TK story.

## Yes! I would like to support the work of Talitha Koum

We are grateful for your continued support of our mission to empower women with addiction to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. Donate today to help us continue this essential mission. A Charitable tax receipt will be sent for donations of \$20 or more. For more information, email [admin@talithakoumsociety.org](mailto:admin@talithakoumsociety.org). Registered Charity #89054 8910 RR0001.

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