



FROM THE HEART

'LOVING OUR CLIENTS BACK TO LIVING'

Pictures of happiness on the road to recovery



Making it special: A 'breathtaking' project fuelled by kindness.

It took a real team effort in mid-November to ensure the success of one of the happiest projects that we've undertaken in quite a while. It all started when a benefactor donated funds to ensure that our clients and their children had fancy clothing for the upcoming Christmas holidays. At the same time, Michelle, of Diamond's Edge Photography, offered to take holiday portraits of the women and children at her studio—free of charge. Finally, we marshalled a team of volunteers to shuttle our folks from Gianna and Starr houses to the studio and back. It all ended up going like clockwork, and our clients and their children were simply thrilled. Thank you to everyone who made this possible!

Board member Sharon Ciebin commented, "This is simply breathtaking—changing the lives of others, sharing love and kindness," she said. "The acts of kindness by a few people will have long lasting effects on the lives of women and children currently living at Talitha Koum Society."

Our new look Supports TK's Enduring mission

Welcome to the new-look Talitha Koum, with a refined new logo, coordinated new colours, and new fonts. A new look, yes, but we still have the same compassionate commitment to loving our clients back to living.

The new look will be most evident on our revamped website, www.talithakoumsociety.org.

The changes are designed to build more immediate recognition for who we are and, by so doing, develop enduring relationships with our supporters and clients.

"We hope you agree that our new look has a warm and welcoming feel," says communications-committee chair Terry O'Neill. "And a special TK 'thank you' to Anchor Marketing for being so talented and supportive."



GRADUATING WITH GRATITUDE

‘A place where I could be vulnerable’

Now graduated from Talitha Koum’s recovery program and volunteering as a support worker two days a week, Sherry laughs and shakes her head at memories of her challenging initial weeks living in Starr House, one of TK’s two recovery homes in Coquitlam.

“It was very difficult,” Sherry says while sipping a warming coffee on a cool November morning. “I knew nothing about what it was going to be like. I was ready and really broken when I came in. I had nothing left to fight with, except I was still extremely angry. I called myself a walking volcano.” Sherry, 43, says her addictions began with drugs and alcohol when she was just 13 years old. “The root was trauma, and that started at four, but I didn’t know how to fix it,” she confides. “I was raised in anger, so no matter what happened— if I got hurt, if I got in trouble— there was always anger around.



Grad Sherry: ‘Given me back a life.’

My only emotions were to people-please or be angry. I didn’t know how to function otherwise.”

Finally, after three decades of addiction, “I just couldn’t control it any longer,” she says. A friend pointed her towards TK.

After the difficult beginning, Sherry says a moment came that changed everything. “I was really upset, my emotions were all over the place, and I just bolted downstairs and was just crying uncontrollably, and one of the other ladies noticed and let [volunteer acting program director Kimmie Jensen] know, and she came down there and sat with me for I don’t know how long, until I basically just uncurled from the fetal position and faced her,” Sherry says.

“That was the little bit of safety that I needed, like I’m in a place where I can be vulnerable, and that allowed me to start working towards breaking down the walls.”

Sherry also credits spiritual guidance provided by Pastor Eric of St. Laurence Anglican Church, located just a few blocks from Starr House. “He just would answer my questions and fostered that belief in me that there has to be something better and opened my eyes to what I had thought was God was actually not God, but was somebody else’s opinion,” Sherry says. “What I am learning now, it changed my life, absolutely.”

Now living in Burnaby, Sherry wants to continue volunteering as a support worker for a few days a week for at least six months so she can stay

connected and help other clients who are just starting their journey of recovery.

“I’m so grateful for the kindness and the openness I was given at the beginning. It helped me be safe and break down the walls,” Sherry says with a huge smile. “This program has absolutely given me back a life I never knew I could have.”

Dough-nating with a lot of love

It was more than just a doughnut-induced sugar buzz we enjoyed in early October when we received the proceeds of a unique fundraising exercise launched by a new Coquitlam café. Kathy and Clint Hiles, proprietors of Doughnut Love, chose Talitha Koum as their Community Love partner for September, meaning that we would receive \$1 for every one of their signature strawberry-lemonade doughnuts sold during the month. That ended up giving us a wonderful dough-nation of \$1,456!

We are most grateful to the Hiles family and to the many patrons who ordered the delicious doughnut! It’s simply wonderful to know that we have so many good folks supporting us!



The Hiles: A lovely dough-nation!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Volunteers are a key to clients' success

By Mary O'Neill

My friends often ask, "How's TK doing these days?" To which I invariably answer, "With your support, very well, thank you!"

Indeed, it is certainly because of our supporters that we have been able to bring on new, experienced staff, watch our veteran staff grow in their abilities and, most importantly, see their dedication bear fruit in the gratifying number of clients who progress through treatment to Second Stage, to Graduation, to returning to classes and parttime work, and then to moving back into the community. The recovery story, that Sherry shares on page two, is a perfect example of this.

We also owe much to volunteers, such Kimmie, acting program director; board member Sharon, teaching budgeting; Joan, our super organizer and driver; Chris and Val, leaders of the Days for Girls sewing project; and Adler University students Julia (working with children) and Dhania (resource gathering). If it takes a village to raise a child, it must be true that it takes a community to walk with those who have embarked on the road to recovery. Thanks to all of you!

Pleased to receive passes!

Once again, TransLink has generously donated transit passes, allowing our clients to reach appointments and meetings that are crucial to their recovery. Thank you, TransLink! We are most grateful!

Walk for Freedom marches to success



Family of the Heart: A fun and friendly event to support our work.

The weather may have been cool and damp, but our spirits were still high as Talitha Koum's "family of the heart" gathered on the morning of Saturday, October 16 to relaunch one of our traditional fundraising events, the Walk for Freedom.

Like a great many other such events, our Walk was sidelined because of the COVID pandemic, and so, once we learned that restrictions for outdoor events were being eased, we were thrilled to be able to take the "steps" to walk to the starting line yet again.

And what fun we had strolling with friends to Como Lake, looping it three times, and then heading back to St. Laurence Anglican Church, which allowed us to use its kitchen to provide post-walk coffee to participants. Highlights certainly included the participation of several alumnae, along with former executive director Sharon De Lalla. And the friendly fundraising competition between board members Sr. Denece Billesberger and Brenda Beck was enjoyed by all!

"The icing on the cake was the fact we raised a record amount of money," says Executive Director Odo Nkum, who herself braved the elements to participate. "We feel specially blessed to have received so much support for an event that is close to our hearts. Thank you to all the sponsors."

Our 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.



TALITHA KOUM
SOCIETY

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Talitha Koum Society is a

Registered Charity

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Talitha Koum Society is supported by the Government of Canada’s Emergency Community Fund, the Community Foundations of Canada, & the Coquitlam and PoCo Community Foundations.

Thankful for kindness of our friends

It seems at times that we are in a constant state of gratefulness because we receive so much support from so many different people and organizations. All are vital to our work, as we simply could not exist without the financial



donations of our supporters, and the gifts of food and merchandise from kind-hearted individuals and organizations.

Epitomizing this charity is Amanda, pictured at left, who recently delivered goods of all sorts (from kitchen supplies to sanitizing wipes) from the University of British Columbia Faculty of Medicine’s Community Women’s Initiative. And, oh yes, the Initiative also gave us \$150 and a gift card for food purchases. We are most grateful for their generosity and that of scores of other individuals and groups who partner with us. Thank you!

Butterflies will take flight in the new year

The butterflies are returning! Yes, after a long hiatus caused by the COVID pandemic, we are planning our second **Set Her Free—Butterfly Release** for June 25, 2022. More details will be available in the New Year. Our first Butterfly Release in 2019 was a great success, bringing together members of the public, political leaders, and our widespread TK family for a community-building afternoon that was rich in uplifting symbolism. None of us will forget the moment we opened our little boxes and set free our Painted Lady Butterflies. We hope you can join us in June to make new butterfly-release memories!



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

We are grateful for your continued partnership! Please support us today by donating to help us continue our essential work. A Charitable tax receipt will be sent for donations of \$20 or more. For more information, email admin@talithakoumsociety.org. Registered Charity #89054 8910 RR0001. We will keep all personal information in strictest confidence. You can donate online at www.talithakoumsociety.org/donate, or mail cheques to:

*Talitha Koum Society
Como Lake Post Office PO Box 64596
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