



TALITHA KOUM SOCIETY

# FROM THE HEART

“LOVING OUR CLIENTS BACK TO LIVING”



*SO MUCH FUN! Our clients, including the two young women pictured on what is obviously a thrilling ride, sure enjoyed themselves at Vancouver's Playland during a late-August excursion, an outing that was made possible, in part, by proceeds of our ongoing Return-It Depot bottle drive. Thanks to all those who have donated their bottles and cans, and to the special sponsors who also supported the outing. What a great (if somewhat soggy) day we had! TK's summer activities also included a client-and-alumnae picnic and a five-night camping trip (see page 3).*

## Fun for the little ones at Starr House

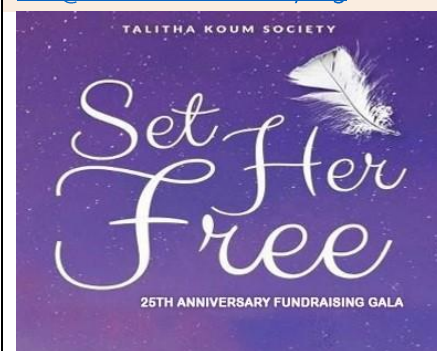


We've had several youngsters with their client-mothers at our recovery homes this summer, so we were thrilled when one of our volunteers found this play set (left) at the side of a road in Port Coquitlam, with a "FREE" sign on it. The homeowner happened to be there and said the set had faithfully served two generations of kids. The volunteer took the set home, cleaned it up, and then installed it at Starr House, where our clients' children have been enjoying the slide and teeter-totter ever since.

## You're invited: 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala on Nov. 2

Friends, supporters, and alumnae of the Talitha Koum Society are invited to join with us as we celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a gala fundraiser on Saturday, Nov. 2. And what an evening we have in store for you: a delicious Italian-themed buffet dinner catered by Pasta Polo; entertainment by talented vocalist Tami Comuzzi; fundraising including a silent auction, and 50/50 and prize-board draws; inspirational speakers; and a few other special surprises—all coordinated by MC Terry O'Neill. The gala takes place at St. Clare of Assisi Parish Hall, 2888 Delahaye Dr., Coquitlam. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and dinner is at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$80 per person or \$600 for a table of eight, with a charitable tax credit of \$30 or \$200, respectively.

Tickets can be ordered online at <https://bit.ly/3XevogT> or by emailing [info@talithakoumsociety.org](mailto:info@talithakoumsociety.org).



# ‘Something just clicked in my head’

## Kristen’s desperate decision to return home opened the door to her recovery



**TK GRAD KRISTEN:** *Gratitude is blossoming.*

On the eve of her graduation last month from Talitha Koum’s recovery program, Kristen can’t stop smiling and, at times, giggling with enthusiasm as she recounts the ups, the downs, and her final, near-miraculous, ascent to recovery.

Kristen, 38, tells of how she began smoking marijuana when she was 11, of her use of harder drugs within a few years, of the drug-fuelled “rave scene” in her central B.C. hometown, of her struggles to find sobriety, and of her many relapses.

She tells of a tumultuous relationship with her boyfriend, and of their son, now in foster care and whom she has not seen for two years.

She tells of how, homeless, she spent two freezing winters eking out a living by panhandling and selling drugs, finding refuge in a tent and then an old RV.

And, finally, she tells of how, two years ago, her mother, Wanda, found Kristen’s panhandling sign in a bush and wrote a message on it: “Kristen, your mother misses you.” Kristen pauses as she reflects on what she felt when she read that message. “It made me sad and kind of ashamed,” she says. “It meant that my mom knew where I was and what I was doing. But at the same time, I never doubted that she cared about me.”

The memory stayed with her as the months passed and she lost an attempt to regain custody of her son. “It was really demoralizing,” she recalls. “I got really depressed. I just gave up.” At the same time, though, “I was praying a lot. And I feel that, through this series of unfortunate events, I realized how God was getting me out of that situation. Because I was burning all my bridges with all the people that could keep me in in that lifestyle.”

Finally, soon after being thrown in a drunk tank for the night, she turned to her mother for help.

“Something just clicked in my head. Everything was

going so wrong, and I was like just a few blocks away from my mom’s house, so I walked up there and came in and just kind of begged. I just needed a place. I was just so down.”

Kristen slept on a couch for two days while Wanda called TK to try to find a recovery bed for her. Why TK? Because it was at Talitha Koum, you see, that Wanda herself found the strength and spiritual growth to recover from her addiction.

Says Kristen: “So she made all the phone calls to TK for me. And then one morning, it was a Sunday, and I jumped off the couch and said, ‘Let’s go!’”

It was now or never, and she recalls she was so focussed on getting to TK that, after grabbing a pillow and blanket, she left her shoes and backpack behind. The day-long drive took them on a detour to narrowly escape a raging forest fire. “It was horrifying,” says Kristen. “But my mom was not going to stop. She wasn’t stopping for anything. And I felt like God was making this path so difficult for me that I would never forget it.”

Gratitude now blossoms from those memories—gratitude for the structure and meaning that TK’s spiritually rich recovery program has given her and gratitude for her mother’s support. Wanda joined Kristen in Coquitlam a week after Kristen’s graduation for a joyful reunion, as shown in the photo to the right.

Today, one year after she entered Starr House, Kristen is determined to finish her high-school education, with a focus on upgrading her math and physics to enable her to qualify for an environmental-science program. “I never had much of a long-term goal before,” Kristen says. “But now I do, and the support I received from Talitha Koum has helped to make it happen.”

*‘I realized how God was getting me out of that situation.’*



**KRISTEN & WANDA**



# Camping 2024: Connection & Growth

It's been said, "In every walk with nature one receives far more than one seeks." The truth of this was certainly clear following our second annual camping trip in early August.

Led by Program Director Kimmie Jensen and supported by TK President Mary O'Neill, clients, staff, and alumnae spent five days at a lakeside site, just a three-hour drive from Coquitlam.

The graphic above shows the words our clients used to describe their experience. Here are some more-detailed reflections:

*"Camping was extremely enjoyable. I was hesitant, as I am not an avid camper and haven't been camping as an adult, sober. I was able to let my guard down and enjoy laughter and vulnerability with the other women. Being in nature was therapeutic and it was nice to really be*

*able to appreciate the beauty and outdoors with the women while having the opportunity to get to know them better in a different, more relaxed environment. I loved being in the trees, barbecuing, stargazing, and swimming. I found the overall experience to be memorable."*

*"What I liked about camping was the fresh air, sunshine, and I really enjoyed facing my fears and swimming! Overall, it was a positive experience, filled with peace and serenity."*

*"My feelings were: happy, joyous, free, connected with the other women, beautiful, and relaxing. We clients were able to have a relaxing, fun- and sun-filled time. It was like the mini-vacation we all needed. It was a joy to see Kimmie and Mary and all the other staff having fun, cooking, and dancing with the music.*

*Food was always served warm and with a smile. It was a nice change from our daily chores. Thank you for allowing me to grow, bond with my sisters, and catch up on some well-needed rest."*

*"At first it was emotional from my past experience. But having the support and unconditional love [allowed me to] enjoy nature."*

*"Camping made me feel at peace and connected to God. Being surrounded by nature created feelings of oneness with those around me, who were also enjoying the many positive effects of being surrounded by all things natural. Swimming in the lake, staring up at the vastness of the sky while floating on my back, made me feel magical—small yet big, like I was right where I'm supposed to be."*



**TALITHA KOUM**  
SOCIETY

### Board of Directors

Mary O'Neill (President)  
Sylvia Wallis (Vice-President)  
Maria Tanaka (Treasurer)  
Jessica Spraggs (Secretary)  
Sr. Denece Billesberger, sej  
Terry O'Neill  
Jaime Palmer-Hague

**Executive Director** Odo Nkum

**Program Director** Kimmie Jensen

**Outreach/Family Enhancement**

Maureen Bennie Boakye

### Registered Charity

#89054 8910 RR0001

Mail: Como Lake Post Office  
Box 64596 Coquitlam, BC V3J 7V7  
Office: (604) 492-3393  
[admin@talithakoumsociety.org](mailto:admin@talithakoumsociety.org)  
[www.talithakoumsociety.org](http://www.talithakoumsociety.org)

### 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, & life-skills training.

The society operates two recovery homes, Starr House and Gianna House, and one bridging home, Redemption House.



*MAKING A SPLASH! Our clients had lots to cheer about this past Spring when the Nothin' Dragon Paddling Society led them on an exhilarating dragon-boat excursion along the waters off Rocky Point Park in Port Moody. Teamwork, exercise, and plenty of fresh air sure made for a fine outing. Thanks to TK supporter Robbin Whachell for organizing and to all the Nothin' Dragon members who helped out!*



*FRIENDS IN THE FOREST! Working with the Hoy-Scott Creek Watershed Society, our clients donned their rain gear and helped collect garbage along Hoy Creek a few months ago. Community service is an important part of the TK recovery model.*

## PARTNER WITH US THROUGH A DONATION

As a CRA-registered non-profit charity, we rely on donations and sponsorships for about one-half of our operating costs. You can help us fill this funding gap by partnering with us as we 'love our clients back to living' by becoming a one-time or monthly donor. Here are the ways you can walk with our clients on their recovery journey:

**Online:** Simply visit the donation section of our website, [www.tkrecovery.ca/donate](http://www.tkrecovery.ca/donate), and choose to donate through either the **Canada Helps** or **Charitable Impact** portal.

**E-transfer:** E-transfer a donation to us using this email address: [admin@talithakoumsociety.org](mailto:admin@talithakoumsociety.org).

**Cheque:** Mail a cheque to us and make sure you include all your contact info, including an email address. Mail: Talitha Koum Society, Como Lake Post Office, PO Box 64596, Coquitlam, B.C., V3J 7V7

**Phone:** Call us at 604-492-3393 for information or assistance in donations of any sort.

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. We will keep all personal information in strictest confidence. By providing your email address, you are agreeing to receive emails from Talitha Koum Society. These may include e-newsletters, event invitations, and requests for support.