



TALITHA KOUM SOCIETY

FROM THE HEART

"LOVING OUR CLIENTS BACK TO LIVING"

A renewed Starr is born!



A MARVELLOUS MESS: Executive Director Odo Nkum overseeing repainting.

It's been said that God moves in mysterious ways. But Talitha Koum's executive director, Odo Nkum, says that, for now at least, the hand of Providence is guiding TK on a path forward that's as clear as the sky on a sunny, mid-summer's day.

The most obvious and immediate new direction is a complete repainting of Starr House's interior.

The week-long project is a big job, but TK's partnership with B.C. Housing has made the long-needed, professionally done redecoration possible, Nkum says. The project was timed to take advantage of TK clients' third-annual camping trip, which saw them leave Starr House for five nights. (See page 3 for highlights of the trip.)

With the support of the TK board, Nkum has also led a realignment of staff duties and has facilitated the relocation of some management and leadership spaces.

"It's all about looking to the future and meeting the growing demand for our services," Nkum says.

"The need for addiction-recovery is great. And Talitha Koum's commitment to loving our clients back to living has a record of success that compels us to move forward to meet that need and to restore lives."

Nkum is grateful for the support Talitha Koum receives from its many partners and donors, including foundations, faith groups, corporations, and individuals. "We thank you," she says. "And our clients thank you. We couldn't do this without you."

Talitha Koum Society
2025 Gala
Set Her Free

Join us on Sept 20 at 6:30pm
 for an evening of inspiration,
 fundraising and music!

Purchase Your Tickets here Buffet Dinner
\$75 per ticket (\$25 tax receipt)

Venue: St Clare of Assisi Hall
 2888 Delahaye Ave, Coquitlam

Theme: Black & White
 Attire: Business formal

or email
admin@talithakoumsociety.org

Gala tix now available

Tickets are now available for our 2025 Set Her Free Gala, to be held the evening of Saturday, Sept. 20 at St. Clare of Assisi Parish Hall in Coquitlam. Tickets are just \$75 per person (with a \$25 tax receipt) and include a buffet dinner, inspirational presentations, entertainment by singer Joelle Lush, and a host of fun fundraising activities. Thank you to Gold Sponsor Noura Homes. Please order tickets at <http://bit.ly/4mjb20T> or scan the QR code below. We hope to see you there!



bitly

MELISSA'S JOURNEY TO JOY

‘Now, I can love again’



CHANGE FOR THE BETTER: Melissa before recovery (l) and now.

It was time for a change. After more than three decades of living with addiction, it was time for Melissa to get off the street, get out of homeless shelters, get off drugs, and get back to living.

It was time, she says, to leave behind so many things—the impact of the hurt she suffered by being abused as a little girl, the memories of doing what she had to do to survive on the streets of Vancouver, and the burden of knowing that her lifestyle choices had alienated the people she loved the most—her three children.

All those thoughts and more were going through her head when she walked into Starr House in September of 2024 and began a journey—albeit a rocky and resentful one, at times—that has now taken her to a place she always longed to be: clean and sober with a new outlook on life.

“I feel really good,” Melissa, 44, said in an early-August chat at a Coquitlam coffee shop.

“And I know that what I’m doing now, my children will be able to look at it in the future and know that their mother actually tried. They may not be in my life now but, you know, just by setting an example ...”

Touched by emotion, Melissa doesn’t finish the sentence, but the satisfied and somewhat wry smile on her face tells you all you need to know about how Talitha Koum’s recovery program has kindled another bright light for the universe.

Melissa, a lifelong Lower Mainland resident, speaks candidly of the turbulence and addiction in her upbringing. It was while in foster care, she says, that “the older girls” showed her how to inject drugs and live on the streets. She was just 11 years old when she first shot up cocaine, and 12 when she suffered her first overdose. “Just

‘This time I get
to do it sober.
I’m very grateful.’

ridiculous, eh?” she says. “Coming out of the Balmoral at Main and Hastings ... It was not good, not good.” She credits a loving relationship with a man for getting her off the streets and off hard drugs. Melissa recounts a long, at times hopeful and at other times sorrowful, tale of recovery, heartbreak, tragedy, and an ultimate descent into the two years leading up to her arrival at TK—two years of drug addiction, homelessness, and three attempts at recovery.

An acquaintance steered her toward Talitha Koum, and she entered Starr House with a determination to finally make it work. “I just had enough. I was sick of the way I was living—on the streets, in shelters, on people’s floor. I knew it was time to change.” It wasn’t easy though. “When I came to TK ... I was still running on self-will,” she says. “I had to learn how to surrender. It’s a miracle.” And there’s more: “I was hateful when I came in. I didn’t want anyone to hug me. Now, I can love again. That’s what they do at TK. They love you until you can love again.”

Melissa proudly points to the fact that she had recently marked the one-year anniversary of being off crack cocaine, and was nearing the same mark for quitting marijuana. She says she loves living at TK’s third-stage transition home, Redemption House, and is looking forward to getting back on her feet again—“This time I get to do it sober ... I’m very grateful.”

Already committed to giving back, she meets with new clients almost every week and shares some hard-earned advice: “I’m so happy every time I meet a new client. I say ‘Stay. Don’t leave. You won’t regret it.’”

CAMPING ADVENTURE 2025



***FIVE NIGHTS OF FRIENDSHIP AND FUN:** For the third consecutive summer, staff and volunteers led a busload of clients and alumnae on a five-night camping trip, aimed at building relationships, fostering personal reflection, appreciating the outdoors, increasing physical activity, and simply having fun. We're very grateful for the time and effort a few key individuals devoted to making this now-annual event a success; they know who they are and would prefer to stay anonymous. As well, a big-thank you to Columbus Homes for the donated bus rides and wonderful driver. All in all, a great time was had by all!*

This donation comes because of the wonderful way you are mending women & children back together.

This world can be a very dark place but you bring the light & restore souls.

Our early-July mail brought us a lovely greeting (pictured) that so touched us and warmed our hearts that we decided we just had to share it with you. We are very grateful for such a lovely note and for the generous donation that accompanied it. As a CRA-registered charity, the Talitha Koum Society relies on donations from individuals, corporations, foundations, and church groups for about half of its operation budget. It's only through such amazing financial support that Talitha Koum has been able to serve so many women and children over what's now a full quarter of a century! Together, we really are making a world of difference. Thank you!



TALITHA KOUM
SOCIETY

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Registered Charity

#89054 8910 RR0001

Mail: Como Lake Post Office

Box 64596 Coquitlam, BC V3J 7V7

Office: (604) 492-3393

admin@talithakoumsociety.org

www.talithakoumsociety.org

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Our Mission and Vision

We are a non-profit charity whose

Mission is to nurture women with addictions to lead healthy & fulfilling lives. Our **Vision** is to create a healthier world by empowering women to thrive in recovery.

The society operates three homes in partnership with **B.C. Housing**, the **City of Coquitlam**, and **Redemption Church**.



A TIME TO CELEBRATE: Coquitlam Mayor Richard Stewart shares a happy moment at our annual client and alumnae picnic at Blue Mountain Park with (l-r) staffer Terri, alumna Doreen, President Mary, and staffer Maureen.

Concert hit all the right notes

Vocalist **Laura Crema** and pianist **Miles Black** received a prolonged standing ovation for their performance at Talitha Koum's Jazz Concert on May 30 at Brentwood Presbyterian Church in north Burnaby.

We are most grateful for the donation of their time and talent in support of our goal to love our clients back to living.

Thanks also to host **Pastor Brian Fraser**, who so generously gave us the use of his church and also arranged for Miles and Laura to entertain us. As well, we are grateful for the work of TK

volunteers Jim and Perry, who helped organize the evening, to the **Tri-Cities Soroptimists** for obtaining tickets for many of our clients to attend, and to all the attendees who helped make this a magical evening. Thank you!



PARTNER WITH US THROUGH A DONATION

Online: Visit www.tkrecovery.ca/donate, or use our QR code at right:

E-transfer: E-transfer: admin@talithakoumsociety.org.

Cheque: Mail (include your return and email addresses): Talitha Koum Society, Como Lake Post Office, PO Box 64596, Coquitlam, B.C., V3J 7V7

Phone: Call 604-492-3393 for more information.

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. 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.

