



TALITHA KOUM SOCIETY

FROM THE HEART

"LOVING OUR CLIENTS BACK TO LIVING"



WALK FOR FREEDOM 2025: Clients, staff, alumnae, and a few friends gathered in October for our annual fundraising walk-a-thon around Como Lake. Unlike last year's deluge, the weather this year was mostly dry. Thanks to the dedication of the participants and their sponsors, we enjoyed another successful event!

'With humility and gratitude'

When the Talitha Koum Society was given two tickets to the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver's annual Archbishop's Dinner, we had a good feeling that something special was in the air. And indeed there was!



NKUM & O'NEILL: Thank you!

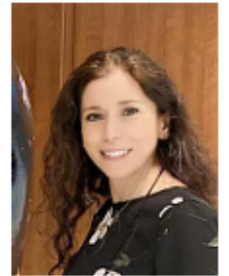
With TK Executive Director **Odo Nkum** and Society President **Mary O'Neill** listening attentively along with almost 1,000 other attendees, the archdiocese announced that the event's proceeds would establish the **Living Waters Fund**. It will assist charitable organizations such as Talitha Koum that support women when hardships, including abuse, addiction, and isolation, arise in their lives.

"Your contributions will directly impact the lives

of many women and children, providing strength, healing, and opportunities for new beginnings," the archdiocese said. Nkum said this sort of generosity continues to amaze her. "I am filled with humility and gratitude in response to this wonderful act of generosity," she said. "We continue to be blessed because our clients will surely benefit from such amazing support. Thank you!"

TK welcomes new director to board

We had another successful AGM this September, highlighted by the election of a new member to our board of directors, **Gina Sarkis-Dina**. Sarkis-Dina is a pharmacist who was a Shoppers Drug Mart franchise owner for 16 years in Coquitlam. She first connected with the Talitha Koum Society through her work in the pharmacy. Witnessing the organization's impact, on women in need of a second



Gina Sarkis-Dina

chance, made its mission especially close to her heart. At the board meeting after the AGM, our executive team was returned by acclamation. We are most grateful for the dedication of President **Mary O'Neill**, Vice-President **Sylvia Wallis**, Treasurer **Maria Tanaka**, and Secretary **Jessica Spragg**. Also returning for another term are Directors **Jaimie Palmer-Hague** & **Terry O'Neill**.



BAGS OF BITS & BITES: Food Link's Reihane Mirjani (I) delivered excess food from an autumn Chamber event to Gianna's House's Helen. Thanks!

Christmas at Talitha Koum



JOYOUS SEASON: Grateful TK clients embrace the Christmas spirit by performing their own acts of charity.

It should come as no surprise that Christmas is a special time for Talitha Koum's "family of the heart." Not only do our clients celebrate the season in many ways, but our supporters and partners pitch in to make it a most memorable occasion. In recent years, for example, sewing-club volunteers **Chris and Val** led a Christmas Pageant with our clients. **Milena** led a Christmas-treats-baking day; **Meghan** took clients on a Christmas-lights bus tour; and **Michelle** snapped Christmas portraits of clients.

Every year, the Griggs family donates a multiple-course Christmas dinner; **St. Alban's Anglican, St. Laurence Anglican, St. Clare of Assisi Catholic, and Good Shepherd Lutheran** donate a veritable sleigh-full of gifts; and **CA Church** invites clients to its Christmas Village. Another tradition involves our staff and volunteers (and their children),

who enjoy a Christmas party of their own, complete with a visit from Santa Claus.

This year, our clients are giving back by volunteering with the **Salvation Army**, ringing bells and collecting money for the charity. Clients are also serenading the neighbourhoods around our recovery homes with Christmas carols.

Whether the celebrations involve residents, staff, volunteers, or alumnae, they are all filled with joy and gratitude, while also reinforcing TK's strong sense of family.

Of course, Christmas also carries a spiritual meaning of renewal and hope, aligning with TK's values.

"Ultimately," says Executive Director **Odo Nkum**, "Christmas at TK is about connection, healing, and celebration of life. The holiday becomes a reminder that recovery is about living in God's love, and embracing life as it was intended to be."

Inspirational panel highlights special evening



Gala 2025

*GREAT GALA: What a memorable evening of fun, friendship, and fundraising we enjoyed at our 'Set Her Free Gala' in September. Clockwise from top left: Our beautiful venue, St. Clare of Assisi Parish Hall; desserts by Milena Bebic; programme noting **Diamond Sponsor Beedie** and **Gold Sponsor Noura Homes**; panel-discussion participants; buffet by Pasta Polo; entertainers Joelle Lush and Lincoln Tatem. Thank you to all the volunteers, sponsors, donors, and attendees!*

The purpose of our annual gala is not only to raise funds for our operations, but also to inform and inspire attendees. We think it is safe to say that our 'Black and White' Set Her Free Gala for 2025 succeeded on both counts!

Through sponsorships, ticket sales, and generous donations, the financial support we received will be key to our ability to continue fulfilling our mission of "loving our clients back to living" at our three Coquitlam homes.

The panel discussion, led by Program Director **Kimmie Jensen**, inspired laughter, rapt attention, and more than a few tears as graduates **Sherry**, **Diane**, and **Helen** shared the stories of their recoveries.

Sherry explained how she had hit "rock bottom" before reaching out for help, "and it changed my life." Her road to recovery was a rocky one, as she initially resisted the spiritual aspect of TK's program. But after weeks of struggle she

accepted the unconditional love being offered and "let the walls down." Now, she couldn't be happier.

Diane spoke about how she had overdosed a half-dozen times, and was hopeless and homeless. But prayer brought her to Talitha Koum, and it "saved my life."

Helen shared how multiple stays at other treatment centres failed to help. She said she had hit rock bottom when she found herself in a taxi on her way to TK, and then felt pushed, by an inexplicable force, through the front door of Starr House. "And when I walked through that door, Sherry was standing at the top of the stairs ... and she said, 'It's going to be OK.'" Then, in the office, overcome by fear and tears, she received a big hug from volunteer Mary O. "It was the first time I can honestly say I felt safe." As the weeks went by she let God into her life and her recovery took hold.

Thank you, ladies, for your candour and courage!



TALITHA KOUM
SOCIETY

Board of Directors

Mary O'Neill (President)
Sylvia Wallis (Vice-President)
Maria Tanaka (Treasurer)
Jessica Spraggs (Secretary)
Jaime Palmer-Hague
Gina Sarkis-Dina, Terry O'Neill

Executive Director Odo Nkum

Program Director Kimmie Jensen

Family-Enhancement Co-ordinator

Maureen Bennie Boakye

House Program Co-ordinators

Terri Carter, Ama Ansah

Registered Charity

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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**.



TRIO ON TV: Community TV host Genevieve Kyle-Lefebvre (l) interviewed TK Program Director Kimmie Jensen (centre) and Executive Director Odo Nkum this fall for a half-hour segment of Tri-Cities Community Television's Face to Face program. Kyle-Lefebvre was most impressed with the work of Talitha Koum, writing later that, "In a region grappling with the opioid crisis, Talitha Koum offers something rare and practical: staged housing, long-term support, and a path to dignity." Kyle-Lefebvre also noted that community partnerships are vital to TK's continuing success, and that we welcome volunteers as drivers, gardeners, handypersons, workshop facilitators, "and grandmothers who can hold babies while mothers attend program." As Nkum said during the interview, "If you want a practical way to reduce overdose deaths and homelessness in the Tri-Cities, this is it. Stand with the women as they rise." You can watch the full interview on YouTube at this link: bit.ly/4pc3IFR.



With the festive season upon us now, we thought we'd remind you that your empty beverage containers can benefit Talitha Koum if you take them to a **Return-It** recycling depot.

Simply pack the bottles and cans in clear plastic bags and

take them to the Return-It's Express kiosk. Enter the TK code (our phone number, 604-492-3393) and the machine will print coded peel-and-stick labels.

You then affix the labels to your bags, scan them, and then place them in the nearby bin. TK will be credited for the value of the cans and bottles when staff count them later.

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.

