

Tamara Nicole Martens

Tamara Nicole Martens was born September 4, 1976, in the City of Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, a “Sourdough” by Yukon standards.

She was an absolute joy. Cute and full of energy, she developed an adorable personality and was an attentive and devoted big sister to her brother Jordan, born 5 years later.

Tamara excelled in school. She also sang in the choir and participated in many school productions. An attractive teenager, she was popular with her friends. She attended schools in Kelowna, Burnaby, and Coquitlam, graduating from Centennial High School, and later earning an Associate degree from Langara Junior College. She attended Simon Fraser University to work on her Criminology degree.



Tamara loved learning about criminal behavior and working with inmates in various prisons in the Lower Mainland. Fascinated by the prison system, she wanted to work as liaison to prisoners, to provide counselling and support for the inmates.

How did Tamara get so interested in this type of work? From age 12 to 21, she went to school, partied, and lived in her addictions to drugs and alcohol. Her life was truly a nightmare and totally out of control. At 21, she realized that if she did not stop using drugs and alcohol, she would not make her 22nd birthday.

She had a huge heart for people, especially children who had suffered from drug and alcohol abuse.

And so began her struggle for sobriety. December 23, 1998, was the beginning of her new clean and sober life. To signify her new identity, she preferred to be called Tamara instead of Tammy.

She had a huge heart for people, especially children who had suffered from drug and alcohol abuse. As she recovered, she volunteered each week at the Willingdon Youth Detention Centre. Tamara loved those kids and freely shared her own story of addiction and recovery, encouraging them with hope for a better future.

In the last few months of her life, she worked in halfway houses and was particularly proud of her job with the First Nations group called Young Eagles. She was the only white person they had hired in their 60 years.



On March 12, 2005, Tamara was diagnosed with pneumonia. I took her to Eagleridge Hospital where she was admitted for treatment. Two days later in hospital, her oxygen mask came off accidentally and she died from complications.

In her honour, Jordan and I have founded the Tamara Nicole Memorial Fund, whose proceeds will be allocated to pay for the education of kids leaving halfway houses or recovery places and needing training for gainful employment. To be eligible, they must be living in a safe, drug-free environment. The funds will be used to pay for tuition fees for short-term training in areas such as hairdressing and mechanics, etc. The goal is to help these kids learn a skill that will help them support themselves when they are back in the community. Tamara is greatly missed by many, many people. We know she would be proud of the work that will continue in her name.

Please mail contributions to:

C. Keri Martens, Notary Public
215 – 1046 Austin Avenue
Coquitlam, BC V3K 3P3 ▲