

STANDUPWITHTESSA

PRESENTS



behind my smile

a Deaf Survivor Memoir

A MEMOIR CAMPAIGN LAUNCH PARTY

SPONSOR PACKAGE &
EVENT DETAILS



JUNE 14TH, 2025
5 PM - 9 PM

NVRLND. Arts Foundation
1048 21 Avenue Southeast
Calgary Alberta
T2G 1N2

PHOTOGRAPHY by Zev Abosh BEAUTY by Douglas Cressman DESIGNED by Tessa R. Lerbekmo-Joyes

Help us spread awareness

about sexual violence, discrimination + disabilities.

THE CAMPAIGN

Tessa is documenting her journey of healing, growth, creativity, empowerment, and reclaiming her strength after surviving disability discrimination, sexual violence, and multiple traumas.

She has been working on the first part of her memoir for the last 20 years, having started it during the abuse; it has now come to an end and is ready to be published.

STAND**UP**WITHTESSA

THE CAMPAIGN

To help her celebrate and raise funds for the publication of the book over the summer, this event invites donations to her campaign, offers networking opportunities, and provides chances to enjoy beverages, food, and entertainment while diving deeper into the memoir.

The goal is to raise \$8,000 for the editing and publishing of the book. Meanwhile, Tessa is also working on the second part of the memoir, which is scheduled for publication in 2026 or 2027.

The actual book launch celebration will be this Fall.

You are invited to this event, and Tessa would love to see you, reconnect with old friends, and meet new people she has connected with online. If you cannot make it to the event, no worries— the campaign is online and will offer different rewards for donations.



STANDUPWITHTESSA

Welcome to my sacred life project—a vulnerable, raw, and truthful memoir. This work has been twenty years in the making and spans deeply personal themes: sexual violence, Complex PTSD, eating disorders, therapy, creation, healing, hitting rock bottom, and questioning whether I would survive. But I did.

Did you know that approximately 80% of Canadian women facing challenges have experienced abuse?

My name is Tessa Lerbekmo - Joyes. I am a Deaf creative and a survivor. I've been an artist since childhood—resilient and thriving—even after encountering a rapist who impacted my life for two decades. One of the ways I survived was by writing and creating. The pain inside me was too much to hold in, so I turned to words to make sense of what happened. I researched, wrote, designed, and processed everything on paper. The result is a beautiful, cathartic story that I hope will educate future generations about narcissism, abuse, disability, discrimination, and sexual violence.

I've chosen to publish this memoir through pre-orders so readers can receive their books promptly—and, if possible, so I can meet them in person.

STANDUPWITHTESSA

Being a sexual assault survivor is incredibly challenging, but for Tessa—a Deaf woman from Alberta—the barriers are even greater. In a world built for hearing people, she has faced constant communication challenges and daily obstacles. Despite growing up in a loving family, they couldn't protect her from everything.

In 2006, at age 18, Tessa left for college, stepping into independence for the first time. There, she encountered a man who would go on to devastate her life. Abusive narcissists know how to prey on kind and naive individuals—and he did. Trapped and isolated in her condo, she endured two years of sexual, emotional, mental, and physical abuse without realizing the extent of the trauma until it nearly broke her.

Eventually, she reconnected with Nick, a former high school classmate, who helped her escape the relationship by offering safety and understanding. They fell deeply in love. Although the abuse ended, Tessa continued to live with her abusive roommate for another year.

The damage, however, had already been done.

Tessa and Nick eventually married and welcomed their first daughter. Although her abuser was no longer in their lives, the trauma lingered beneath the surface. After their second daughter was born, Tessa's PTSD erupted, leading to insomnia, self-harm, and psychological breakdowns.

In 2010, her doctor referred her to a therapist. It was during these sessions that she finally revealed the truth: she had been raped multiple times. She felt consumed by darkness but was ready to confront it.

Encouraged by her therapist, Tessa chose to report the crime. Although uncertain of the outcome, she pressed forward. Detectives found enough evidence to proceed, and she made the brave decision to testify—not once, but twice.

What followed was an eight-year ordeal beginning in 2016 and ending in 2024. As a Deaf woman, Tessa faced immense discrimination and systemic barriers in court—far more than most survivors ever experience. During the process, she learned about another victim who had suffered similar abuse in the same condo. The revelation triggered buried trauma but also led to a profound connection. They met, found solace in each other's stories, and realized they were not alone. However, legal constraints meant they couldn't continue their contact.

Both women, burdened by Complex PTSD, had to navigate the court system's delays and dehumanizing procedures on their own. They learned that reporting rape often exposes a system that protects perpetrators more than it supports survivors. Still, they held their heads high.

Through chronic pain, nerve damage, countless medications, discovery of a teratoma in her brain, and years of physiotherapy, Tessa has come to accept that what happened to her was real—but it does not define her. She is now an advocate, a role model, and a source of strength for women across generations. Her journey continues, as does the healing. And though the darkness hasn't fully disappeared, it grows fainter every day.

Tessa did not give up. And she never will. She refuses to let her rapist win.

STANDUPWITHTESSA

THE SPONSOR PACKAGE DETAILS

This event is seeking sponsors at various levels to contribute services, products, or donations in support of launching this powerful campaign.

Sponsors will be aligned with the values and mission of both the book and the event: raising awareness about sexual violence, discrimination, and disabilities. These conversations are more crucial than ever in 2025, as we work to protect future generations from abuse and harm. The more we understand these issues, the better equipped we are to recognize and prevent the harmful behaviors of perpetrators—before it's too late.

Several early readers have shared a powerful takeaway: this story has the potential to save lives.

DIAMOND

\$2500.00

**Value of Products,
Services, or Donations
Includes:**

- Logo featured on the media wall
- Logo placement in promotional videos
- Social media shout-outs featuring your logo
- Featured article in the magazine
- Dedicated blog post
- Logo included in event programs
- Logo displayed on event posters and signage

PLATINUM

\$1000.00

**Value of Products,
Services, or Donations
Includes:**

- Logo featured on the media wall
- Logo placement in promotional videos
- Social media shout-outs featuring your logo
- Logo in the magazine
- Logo in blog post
- Logo included in event programs & signage

GOLD

\$500.00

**Value of Products,
Services, or Donations
Includes:**

- Logo featured on the media wall
- Social media shout-outs featuring your logo
- Logo in the magazine
- Logo in blog post
- Logo included in event programs
- Logo displayed on event posters and signage

SILVER

\$250.00

**Value of Products,
Services, or Donations
Includes:**

- Social media shout-outs featuring your logo
- Logo in the magazine
- Logo included in event programs
- Logo displayed on event posters

BRONZE

\$100.00

**Value of Products,
Services, or Donations
Includes:**

- Social media shout-outs featuring your logo
- Logo included in event programs

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NVRLND.



"In the heart of Ramsay stands NVRLND., a testament to transformation and creativity.

What began as an abandoned hotel, with whispers of stories untold, has been reborn through imagination and determination. Alongside, a bridal boutique, silent and waiting, found new purpose.

Together, they've been converted into a vibrant ecosystem for the arts - NVRLND.

Now home to 26 artist studios and a dynamic event space, NVRLND. serves as a beacon for the arts community, offering a place for creation, collaboration, and celebration."



What is the parking like?

There are three parking stalls located behind the boutique for a convenient load in and out. There is also a large parking lot located on the west side of the studio building as well as free street parking in front of all of our buildings. So in summary, there is lots of parking.

MORE DETAILS COMING SOON.

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