

September 2021

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# ALL HALLOWS EVE HARVEST FESTIVAL

At Gateway Park  
October 23, 2021

Join us from Noon to 4:00 pm  
for the Harvest Festival!

🛒 Get a head start on your gift shopping at the  
vendor booths! Art, jewelry, DIY, handcrafted gifts and more!

🚚 If you and your crew need a bite to eat, stop  
by a food truck or two. The delicious fare will keep up your  
energy for the fun outdoor games! Potato sack races,  
pumpkin tic tac toe, and more!

Eat, shop, play games, and listen to the DJ spin some tunes!

Stay with us though...

Get spooky from 4 pm to 7 pm  
in the Haunted Barn!

👻 Ghosts, 🕷️ Spiders, 🎃 Jack O' Lanterns,  
and more! 🦇



SCAN ME

At Gateway Park  
October 23, 2021

If you are interested in being a vendor at this event, contact [veronica@keypenparks.com](mailto:veronica@keypenparks.com)  
or visit [www.keypenparks.com/event-vendor-application.html](http://www.keypenparks.com/event-vendor-application.html)

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Taralynn Perkins celebrates her graduation in June. *Family photo*

## Homeless in High School

**A young family lost their housing before the pandemic, which has made finding a new home harder than ever.**

CHRIS RURIK, KP NEWS

Two years ago, Taralynn Perkins, then 16, came home to a notice posted on her family's front door. It was around the Fourth of July. She, her father Todd and her brother James had been out enjoying a sunny day with friends. The notice informed them their lease would be terminated at the end of the month. If they had not left by then, they would be evicted.

They have been homeless ever since.

"I was really confused," Taralynn said. The small duplex near Wauna had been her father's home for 16 years. While she had sometimes lived with her mother during childhood, her father's place was consistent.

They had three weeks to pack up their lives. Her father did not hide anything. "My dad's a pretty emotional, sensitive guy. I know he was really angry at the landlord. Every little thing he could think of, he would talk to me about. Sometimes I didn't know what to say, so I just listened. I was confused. I was angry."

Todd, who works in maintenance at a golf club, said he had always had a typical relationship with the landlord. A few times he was late with rent, but he paid the late

fee. When something broke, he fixed it, and the landlord deducted it from his rent. His rent had never been raised and he expected to be able to tell the landlord that he understood if his rent had to go up. He would pay it. But the landlord never gave him an opportunity to have a conversation.

He chose not to fight the eviction. "I'm a big believer in karma," he said. "I didn't want to make any waves." And he did not want an eviction on his record.

Taralynn was entering her junior year at Peninsula High School. For a few weeks a sympathetic friend let them housesit. For

a few months they lived with an uncle. Then they landed in the house of a family friend and have been there ever since. Todd and James converted a shed into a bedroom. Taralynn sleeps in the living room.

They could not bring their dog or cat but Todd's boss lets the pets live in the maintenance yard. "The shop is now rat-free," Todd said.

Their host had just had back surgery when they moved in. Two babies were in the house, as well as a cousin in her twenties. Of Taralynn's grades, social life and



housework, her social life was the first to suffer. “It was stressful because I had to take on a mom role. I felt like that wasn’t my job, but I needed to do it.”

Taralynn wanted her own space. There is none of that when living in someone else’s house. “I’ve been more shut-off. I get easily irritated. I don’t try to be, but that’s just what has happened after so long.”

For his part, Todd credits his kids with keeping the family together. He said that when Taralynn and James were born it was a turning point in his life. He had struggled with anger and depression. Now he jokes with his friends, “The next best thing to God is Todd.” He knows he’s here for a reason. He sobered up for his kids, and they have been his rock throughout the last two years. “Without my kids,” he said, “I don’t know where I’d be.”

In school, only Taralynn’s closest friends knew what she was going through. They helped her pack and move her things and invited her over whenever she needed a break. Distance learning during the pandemic posed an extra challenge. She did well with the format, but she was often distracted. “There are little kids there. It’s not your house.

“I know that during Covid my emotions spiraled.” She tried to paint and do puzzles to pass time. She carried her camera outside and took pictures of everything: “The water, plants, people. I just find the world beautiful.”

At times she found herself pushing friends away. “You want to talk to them but sometimes you feel like it’s too much for them at once. You even have to ask yourself, ‘Am I myself prepared to say it?’ Because if you say it, it makes it real.” Often, she chose to say nothing.

An observant teacher noticed her grades slipping. After she broke down in class one day, he took her aside, offered her food and asked what was going on. She shared everything. He connected her with a school counselor that she met with throughout her senior year. She liked being able to talk with someone who understood how to help air her emotions and sort through them.

Now she wants to share her story: “I don’t know a lot of people, personally, who have gone through this same thing. I think it’s because people don’t like to talk about being homeless. I think it’s important to know that these things happen more frequently than you think or could be happening to someone, and you just don’t know because they don’t talk about it.”

Todd said that recently he and Taralynn came across a homeless man in the street. They stopped to buy the man lunch. Todd realized, “Wait a minute, I’m homeless too, and I’m buying lunch here.” But he still had a job.

“I learned how strong I can be, not only taking on my own emotions, but even my dad’s and brothers. I am their go-to person,” Taralynn said.

Whenever her father goes to look at an apartment or house, she goes with him. They have searched Gig Harbor, the Key Peninsula and Port Orchard for a new home. They want her brother to finish high school at Peninsula, and her father’s whole life is in the area. The flip side of the pandemic eviction moratorium is very low turnover in rental units, asking prices are much higher than in a normal market, and families like the Perkins are left out in the cold.

Todd said that one of the ironies of the situation is that the tenant who moved into his old duplex, on a lease twice as expensive as Todd’s, lost his job one month into the pandemic and has been living there rent-free ever since.

In the current rental market, they believe it makes more sense to buy. Yet home prices regularly jump by tens of thousands of dollars. Options for loans are complicated, as Todd has not had a credit card. He doesn’t have bad credit, Taralynn said, he has no credit. “It’s very confusing to me. How are we supposed to get a credit card to get credit if we can’t get approved for one because we have no credit?”

**“I DIDN’T REALLY THINK ABOUT HOW THE BRAIN WORKS UNTIL WE GOT KICKED OUT,” SHE SAID. “I GOT TO EXPERIENCE MORE EMOTIONS FROM MYSELF AND OTHER PEOPLE. IT GOT ME INTRIGUED.”**

“We’ve kind of just been stuck.”

This past summer brought some relief. Taralynn graduated with her classmates after going back to in-person learning

in March and playing a shortened softball season. The babies in the house moved on. This fall she starts at Western Washington University on a full-ride scholarship.

“It’s going to be hard on my dad, letting me go,” she said. Now that he is looking for a two- rather than a three-bedroom house, she hopes he can find one. “As soon as we put down that payment, a lot of his stress will just go away.”

In college she will share a suite of dorm rooms with five other students. While she loves children and always imagined being a teacher, she now plans to study psychology. Talking with her counselor played a big part in developing her fascination with the human brain and how it shapes a person’s feelings. ■

NEW FALL/WINTER SCHEDULE

Welcome aboard!  
FREE KP BUS CONNECTS

VAUGHN TUE/THUR MORNING

- 8:55 Vaughn Elementary School
- 9:01 Wright Bliss Rd NW @Olson Dr NW
- 9:02 Wright Bliss Road @104th St Ct NW
- 9:03 Union 76 @SR 302/4 Corners
- 9:06 SR 302 @150th Ave/Lake Holiday bus shed
- 9:08 SR 302 @140th Ave/Lake of the Woods
- 9:10 SR 302 @Charboneau Construction
- 9:13 Lake Kathryn Village
- 9:19 Purdy Park & Ride

VAUGHN WEDNESDAY MORNING

- 9:50 Vaughn Elementary School
- 9:51 Wright Bliss Rd NW @Olson Dr NW
- 9:52 Wright Bliss Road @104th St Ct NW
- 9:54 Union 76 @SR 302/4 Corners
- 9:57 SR 302 @150th Ave/Lake Holiday bus shed
- 9:58 SR 302 @140th Ave/Lake of the Woods
- 10:00 SR 302 @Charboneau Construction
- 10:03 Lake Kathryn Village
- 10:09 Purdy Park & Ride

EVERGREEN TUE/THUR MORNING

- 8:50 Evergreen Elementary School
- 8:59 Palmer Lake public access 24th St SW
- 9:00 Palmer Lake 21st St SW @193rd Ave
- 9:05 KPCS Senior Center & Food Bank
- 9:06 Home Gas Station @KP Hwy N
- 9:09 167th Ave Ct NW @KP Hwy N
- 9:13 Food Market in Key Center
- 9:15 KP Hwy N @Minterwood Dr NW
- 9:21 Lake Kathryn Village
- 9:29 Purdy Park & Ride

EVERGREEN WEDNESDAY MORNING

- 9:50 Evergreen Elementary School
- 9:54 Palmer Lake public access 24th St SW
- 9:55 Palmer Lake 21st St SW @193rd Ave
- 10:00 KPCS Senior Center & Food Bank
- 10:01 Home Gas Station @KP Hwy N
- 10:04 167th Ave Ct NW @KP Hwy N
- 10:08 Food Market in Key Center
- 10:10 KP Hwy N @Minterwood Dr NW
- 10:16 Lake Kathryn Village
- 10:24 Purdy Park & Ride

TUE/WED/THUR AFTERNOON

- 4:42 Purdy Park & Ride
- 4:47 Lake Kathryn Village
- 4:50 SR 302 @Windermere Realty
- 4:52 SR 302 @140th Ave/Lake of the Woods
- 4:53 SR 302 @150th/Lake Holiday bus shed
- 4:55 4 Corners gas station @SR 302
- 4:57 Wright Bliss Road @104th St Ct
- 4:58 Wright Bliss Road @Olson Dr
- 5:00 Food Market in Key Center
- 5:01 KP Hwy @84th NW Red Barn
- 5:04 167th Ave Ct NW @KP Hwy N
- 5:08 Home Gas Station @KP Hwy N
- 5:10 KPCS Senior Center & Food Bank
- 5:13 Palmer Lake public access 24th St SW
- 5:14 Palmer Lake 21st St SW @193rd Ave
- 5:18 Evergreen Elementary School
- 5:29 KP Hwy @84th NW Red Barn
- 5:34 SR302 @140th NW Lake of the Woods
- 5:36 SR302 @150th Lake Holiday bus shed
- 5:48 Purdy Park & Ride



253-884-BUSS or  
keypennews.org/kpbus  
for interactive map and  
downloadable schedule

FREE COMMUNITY  
TRANSPORTATION  
FOR ALL AGES  
TUES/WED/THUR  
AM & PM

PLEASE ALLOW ±10 MINUTES  
YOUTH UNDER 12 MUST BE WITH ADULT  
NO BIKES

A partnership with the KP Community Council, Puget Sound Educational Service District and the Peninsula School District.