



# The Best Policy

## Reflecting the glow of recovery from Starlight at Tamasee

By Jon Holland, CEO of Tamasee DAR School



I grew up in a fundamentalist religious environment. The impression I consistently felt was God was pleased with me (even loved me) if I was good, obedient, kept the rules, performed well. In addition, as a child of a dysfunctional home, I internalized the religious message through my brokenness. I had to perform and be good, and when I wasn't, I told myself I couldn't let anyone know. Otherwise, I'd be judged and rejected. So I lied and hid to protect my fragile heart.

It took me well into my adult years to trust I was loved enough to be honest – fully honest. Whether with God or those most dear to me, the fear had produced a lack of integrity, but eventually the safety of acceptance and support in healthy relationships yielded a harvest of authenticity. Learning honesty was scary and sometimes painful, but it felt liberating and empowering to be known and loved for who I really was.

Those of us who have lived in addiction have done a lot of lying – what we used, how much, how often, with who as well as the physical, financial, legal, mental, emotional, social, familial, and spiritual toll. We broke faith with so many again and again. We

minimized, rationalized, justified, denied, and blamed. With each lie, the voice of our conscience grew dimmer. The lies led us deeper into the darkness and further from ourselves.



As a boy, my mom told me, “Honesty is the best policy.” Why? Because she knew that honesty leads to freedom, forgiveness, and restoration. The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous says the 4<sup>th</sup> Step must be done is rigorous honesty and only those who refuse to be honest fail to recover. Why? Because the authors of this proven path to recovery from addiction had experienced the benefits of an honest moral inventory. They knew that the 4<sup>th</sup> Step leads to a clear conscience, the reality of forgiveness, a feeling of being truly known and accepted, a freedom from keeping secrets, being comfortable in our own skin, recognizing what could trip us up again, empowerment to change, and deep sense of serenity.

Wow! That’s a lot of good to come from simply telling God and a trusted person the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. For many in recovery, the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Steps are the first time they’ve ever been fully honest, the first time the mask came off, and looking in the mirror afterwards is a surprising experience. To see yourself and not be ashamed. To feel authentic, true, and ready to face whatever comes next.

At Starlight at Tamassee, we believe rigorous honesty leads moms in recovery into freedom and wholeness, and we support them to take this life changing step. To learn more about Starlight, visit [www.starlight.tdarschool.org](http://www.starlight.tdarschool.org), or contact us at [starlight@tdarschool.org](mailto:starlight@tdarschool.org) or 864-944-1390. If your church or civic group is interested in a presentation on recovery, contact Jon Holland at [jholland@tdarschool.org](mailto:jholland@tdarschool.org).

**Starlight**  
MIRACLES AWAIT AT TAMASSEE