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Stepping into Spring



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Bill Stunt

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Threads of Life newsletter. No matter how much one might like the snow and cold and the associated outdoor activities, it’s always a relief to feel the warmth of the sun and to see the lengthening of the days. It’s our hope that you and your families have “weathered” the winter season well.

Spring, of course, is the season of our yearly public event, Steps for Life. Our annual walk is our biggest single fundraising event and it is by far our most effective tool for raising public awareness of the issues families face when dealing with a workplace related tragedy, accident or illness. Steps for Life (this year Sunday May 5 in most communities) continues to grow in both size and impact. This year we will add walks in three new communities. Our new walks are spread across the country from Nanaimo BC, to North Bay Ontario and to the east coast community of Miramichi New Brunswick.

These walks, like all of the rest, are only possible due to the amazing effort and passion of our volunteers. In this edition of the newsletter you’ll find a profile of one of those amazing people, Cheryl Morrison, who chairs the very successful Steps for Life walk in Fort McMurray Alberta.

Our Family Guides are our front line support network. They help to guide families through what is likely the most challenging circumstance they will encounter in their entire lives. Threads of Life has developed training tools to equip our guides with the skills they need for this critical work. You’ll find details of both our standard and advanced guide workshops in this issue.

And our Speakers Bureau continues to grow as well. We’ll introduce you to our latest additions to this important Threads or Life community service.

And as always, we will bring you stories of families who have and continue to deal with the impact of workplace related injury, illness and death. Mary Lou Gormley talks of her day to day struggle since her husband Robert passed away as a result of mesothelioma which he contracted through workplace exposure to asbestos. Paulette Raymond’s brother died as a result of a tragic incident at the Bedford Nova Scotia shipyard he worked at most of his adult life. These stories remind us all of the reason Threads of Life exists as an important resource for our families.

Missing him every day

Tommy Raymond's family struggles after his death on a container pier

by Paulette Raymond



Tommy Raymond

ON September 13th, 2009, my brother, Tommy Peter Raymond went to work, and he never came home... I miss him every single day of my life.

I thought I knew what pain was. I thought I knew what heartache meant. I thought... I can do this. I can handle this. I can be strong — that's what he would want from me. I was wrong.

The air — it left my lungs that night in a giant whoosh as if it was sucked out of me by a huge vacuum. Everything went still; I couldn't breathe; then the pain hit my chest as I sank to the floor on my knees. It's not true...it can't be...what?? What did you say?? Tommy is gone? Gone where? God no; please don't be true. Please let me wake up. Why??? Why, God? I hung up the phone, wrapped my arms around myself, and rocked back and forth, back and forth. The tears started to fall then and I thought "I'm so sorry Tommy. I'm so sorry. I am your big sister. I was supposed to watch out for you just like when we were little. When did I stop doing my job?"

There are twelve in my family, five boys

and seven girls. Being the oldest girl, I would normally have a trail of children following me...everywhere. He was my little brother, full of mischief, full of laughter... full of life. When Tommy laughed, you couldn't help but join him. His grin could light up a room.

Being close in ages, my brother Gerard and Tommy and I hung out together. We had fun together, built forts, climbed trees, went fishing on the pier, and swam in the fountain at the Public Gardens (much to the security guard's dismay). We often would get into trouble together usually because of one of Gerard's latest schemes. Gerard and I would quickly learn that if we got caught and Tommy was with us then we were really in for it because Tommy would always break under the pressure, and sing like a bird. We laugh at that now — it wasn't so funny back then.

I miss so many things about my brother: his smile, his deep loud voice that shook with laughter when he was telling you a story, his willingness to always help out. No matter what you needed any time of the day or night, Tommy would be there. His many, many friends and family can attest to that. He was a son, a brother, an uncle, a nephew, but most of all he was a Dad; a great Dad to his son Mitchell. Mitch is a special little boy who needed a lot of care and attention, and I watched him grow up with my brother constantly at his side. If Tommy wasn't at work, he was with Mitch. They were inseparable. It warmed your heart to see the love between the two of them. The little boy I had grown up with had become such a great dad and I was so proud of him for that.

Our family will never be the same. We are all different people now. Losing him changed us all right to the very core of our souls. Time passed, life went on, but our hearts are still broken.

He was just an average guy who loved his family; who loved his son and his mom above all else. He was there for mom all the time, running her errands, calling her

and visiting every day to make sure she was ok. He was such a great son and my mom adored him. His death destroyed her and I believe with all my heart that the heartache from losing him would contribute to her death ten months later.

I tell myself that he's in a better place now. I tell myself these things because it makes it easier to go on without him. Most days I still can't believe it. I can't believe that I won't ever see him again. That he won't ever walk through my front door again; that I won't see him smile; hear him laugh.

Our family will never be the same. We are all different people now. Losing him changed us all right to the very core of our souls. Time passed, life went on but our hearts are still broken...shattered.

Tommy started working for Ceres, a container pier in Bedford, Nova Scotia, when he was 15 years old. Working his way up to foreman, he loved his job and loved his friends that worked with him. He was on his way to lock up the containers from the ships that evening in September, when he dropped a lock. It rolled underneath one of the tractor trailers. Trying to scoop out the lock with his foot, he lost his balance and fell. The driver of the tractor trailer got into his vehicle. Not knowing Tommy was back there, he started up his truck, pulling Tommy underneath its wheels in the process. There was an investigation, but no charges were laid — it was just considered to be a horrible accident. Transport drivers on the pier now have to do a walk-around to check their trucks before they start up, so that is one change for the better as a result of Tommy's death.

For our family, every day is a challenge. Tommy is permanently etched in our hearts and will be forever. I drive on the Bedford Highway, and I slow down each and every

time to count the big yellow cranes. One... two...three...there it is. That's where you died that horrible night, Tommy. That's where our lives changed forever; next to the third yellow crane, alone on that cold concrete, underneath the wheels of that tractor trailer. I torture myself with unanswered questions – was he in pain? Was he calling out for mom? Was he afraid? Did he know how much we loved him?

I torture myself with unanswered questions - was he in pain? Was he calling out for mom? Was he afraid? Did he know how much we loved him?

I would give anything...anything...to be able to go back and change the 13th of September 2009. To have him not answer the phone that night; have him say no to that extra shift; keep him safe. But I can't change that. This I have to learn to accept. I pray that someday I will.



Tommy and his son Mitchell were inseparable

A poem inspired by the Reflections Ceremony at the Western Canada Family Forum

These are our babies,
our sisters or brothers;
Or maybe they are our
fathers or mothers.

Perhaps they're our
cousins, nephews or nieces,
whose jobs' repercussions
left hearts broken in pieces.

Sadly we're bonded by
our grief journey's tears,
Gladly found others with
whom to share fears.

We gather together
free of our masks
and with helping Threads
proceed with "getting on" tasks.

...of carrying on in spite of our pain,
able to hope and smile once again.

by Gaye Montpetit



Need a pair of work boots? Consider Mark's.



For a pair of antislip footwear, you might want to consider checking out Mark's. This large Canadian retailer will donate a portion of proceeds from the sales of the antislip Tarantula line of work boots. Look for our logo on the boot tag.

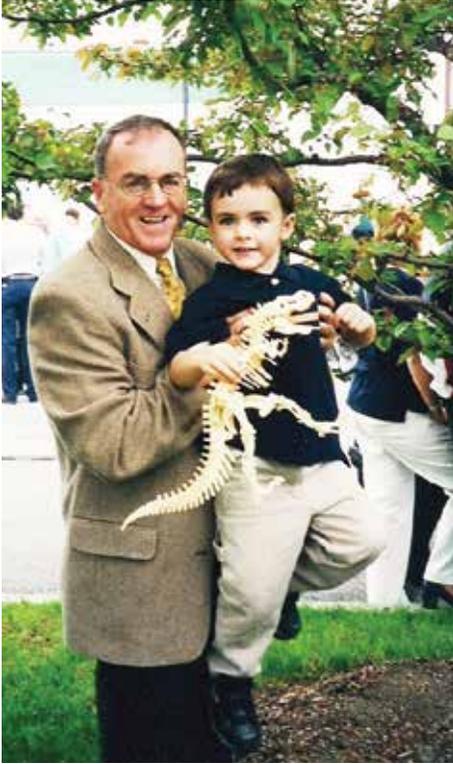
A portion of your boot purchase will be donated to Threads of Life

Smart Clothes. Everyday Living. **Mark's**

Living after loss – A widow’s story

Master tradesman Robert Gormley leaves legacy of joy and fierce determination

by *Mary Lou Gormley*



Robert Gormley with son Andrew, sharing their love of dinosaurs

HOW do you capture the life of a man who has graced the lives of so many; who has chuckled his way into people’s hearts and left his thumbprint on your soul? As I write this story today it is nearly seven years from the day of Robert’s diagnosis of mesothelioma, days shy of the sixth anniversary of his death and just past our son Andrew’s 15th birthday. On a day like this, how does one honour the enduring gift of love that Robert so embodied? You begin, I suppose, at the beginning.

Robert was born February 24, 1941 in Glasgow Scotland, the eighth and last child of his parents Margaret and William Gormley. Because of this he was often referred to as his mother’s war effort. Although he was very young when the war ended, he would tell us stories of seeing the bonfires being lit in the streets as a celebration of peacetime. Perhaps this is when his love of life, dancing, singing and gathering with people was launched. In the Gormley household there were always people visiting and his mother Maggie’s kitchen was usually on full tilt, the chip

pan at the ready. It was, in spite of its apparent poverty, a very happy house where children were cherished; laughter was rich and where making do was the norm. In this atmosphere of affection and humour, Robert developed an abiding love of adventure and a flair for storytelling.

As he grew, he began to find ways to break out of the box and when he took up meditation as a young man, lighting candles in his room at night, his father would often say to his mother, “Oh Maggie, what’s that boy up to now!” Finishing school at 16 he headed off with his father, as so many young men in Scotland did, to the shipyards. And thus began his lifelong journey as a welder. This work, while hard, provided him with the means to support his family and gave him the tools to eventually become a master tradesman who loved his craft.

Clearly, meeting Helen in the early 1960s was a turning point. Once again the boundary breaker found, because of love, an ability to stretch beyond what others thought of him. The combination of Helen and the broader minded world of Canada allowed him the space to grow into the man we all loved and cherished. Parenthood stretched him even farther and the birth of his three girls Susan, Karen and Julie gave him the opportunity to become what he was most renowned as, “the world’s greatest Dad.” When tragedy struck with Helen’s breast cancer diagnosis Robert once again broke the mold and took on the sole parent role with grace and a faith that truly moved mountains. You try raising three teenaged girls! Somehow he knew if he just kept going and just loved that all would eventually be well.

Despite his reluctance to speak on the difficult topic of the loss of his wife and his ongoing journey as a single parent, the tenderness with which he shared this story of love was probably what first captured my heart. He was for me at that time, what he has been for so many, Hesed, a blessing.

This willingness to risk, grow and trust brought him into my life 26 years ago at

a New Beginnings retreat weekend. Never one to say no to a nun, Robert had volunteered to be a retreat leader for others who were struggling with a personal loss. Despite his reluctance to speak on the difficult topic of the loss of his wife and his ongoing journey as a single parent, the tenderness with which he shared this story of love was probably what first captured my heart. He was for me at that time, what he has been for so many, Hesed, a blessing.

Because of the experiences in his own life he knew there was strength in fragility, that sorrow would eventually grow into joy and that even in the midst of deep personal pain there was an opportunity for new life.

It was January of 2006 when our lives changed forever. Robert had taken an early retirement from Kodak several years before while I went back into the workforce full time. Given the circumstances it was a decision I never regretted. Robert had just run a full marathon the fall before and was extremely fit, so his trouble breathing at the end of his runs worried him. The trip to the doctor that day began a 13-month marathon of a very different kind. After a chest x-ray, and the puzzling question the technician asked, “when was it you lost your lung?” we immediately headed to the emergency department at our local hospital. By midnight, after CAT scans and MRIs, he had the first of countless lung drains that would help to ease his suffering and allow him to breathe. We didn’t know what it was, but it sure didn’t look good.

Mesothelioma is a particularly sneaky disease that often mimics other cancers. Because Robert was a part of the first wave of workers impacted by asbestos exposure,

it took well over a month for diagnosis. There was only one lab that could process

the testing and a biopsy was required for a final determination, stage IV pleural mesothelioma. The shock of this information was made even worse when we were told that most people did not survive more than nine months. Our heads were spinning. We had a seven-year-old, three daughters

The very public battle that Robert fought as he was dying was heroic. His ability to let people in, even in his suffering, was a gift that I know many still cherish.

who had already lost one parent to cancer and six grandkids who couldn't understand why Grandpa wasn't coming to visit.

The next few months were a blur of clinic visits, lung drains, and talc surgery to relieve the symptoms. Fear had become our daily companion. Our son Andrew was shuttled between family and friends as I attended all the medical appointments and tried to keep everything else going. Eventually we were sent to Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto, to the newly developing mesothelioma clinic, but the news wasn't great there either. Unless we could prove Robert's cancer was work-related he would not be entitled to the state-of-the-art treatment that they were using for their trial. We were devastated trying to figure out how we could pay for the proposed \$10,000 chemotherapy treatment and then something amazing happened. Within 24 hours a friend emailed a new report on mesothelioma from Cancer Care Ontario, I received a call from the author of the report and by late afternoon a contact from workers' compensation promised to send an advanced care nurse practitioner to our home Monday afternoon.

The arrival that day of Marg Hayley from the WSIB occupational diseases program made all the difference in our lives. She helped us negotiate the necessary forms and systems to get Robert the best possible care. Her compassion for our story and life journey helped to ease what had become a fear-filled and overwhelming experience. Robert was enrolled in the trial and his pre-surgery chemotherapy regime would begin in late June. The doctors had not promised a cure, but rather an extended time of maybe three more years with Andrew. We were cautious but hopeful.

In the end we received the gift of 13 months, longer than some, but it's never long

enough. He lived through a last Christmas and Andrew's eighth birthday. He died 14 days shy of his own 65th and he has already missed nearly half of his son's life. There is an injustice to this that I may never get over. One doesn't expect that working as a welder could kill you, or that the safety

equipment you are required to use every day on the job, an asbestos laced fire blanket, would prove to be a death sentence.

The very public battle that Robert fought as he was dying was heroic. His ability to let people in, even in his suffering, was a gift that I know many still cherish. Although his physical presence is gone, the memory of his humour, his joyful presence and his fierce determination lives on in the fruits he grew over his lifetime. It is very much alive in his children, in Susan's fierce devotion to family and willingness to do what is right in the face of injustice, in Karen's humour, poetry and service to others, in Julie's gentleness, her love of children and story telling, and in Andrew's twinkling eyes, inquiring mind and goofy jokes. It lives in each of his grandchildren in ways that we continue to come to know and in the lives of friends who will never forget his smile.

I like to think that the legacy of love that Robert left in me continues to evolve over time. If I were to measure it by my healing journey with Threads of Life over the past six years, it would look something like this: Year One, pretend it never happened, so don't go to the Family Forum; Year Two, drag small crying child with you and have to leave half way through the first night; Year Three, get asked to help run the Masks of Loss workshop and have slightly bigger child just come to visit; Year Four, we both attend workshops and other family members help me notice how far Andrew has journeyed as they have watched him growing through his loss; Year Five, create and deliver a brand new workshop on spirituality and loss, having had teenaged child say, "Mom I'm good, I don't need to go this year," and just this past month, attending family guide training to begin helping others who have to walk this same journey. It has been a marathon of love, full of hills and some pretty intensive training, and I think he would have been proud.

Would you like to tell your story?

Threads of Life believes that sharing our stories of loss can help promote healing. If you're ready to tell your story of living with a workplace fatality, life-altering injury or occupational illness, please contact Susan Haldane, shaldane@threadsoflife.ca



Robert's family gathers to celebrate Christmas 2012

Volunteer Family Guides join in first-ever advanced training

by Tom Wilson

For those new to the term Volunteer Family Guide (VFG), we are members of the Threads of Life family responding to the part of our mission that states “to help families heal through a community of support....” Our role is to be one-to-one companions to those dealing with the chaos, grief and frustrations that flow from a workplace tragedy. We have received training that enables us to be effective carers, sharers and listeners. Our qualification is having walked the journey of healing to the point where we feel able to support those earlier in the process.

On November 15th, 18 of us gathered at the Kempenfelt Centre to meet our leader/instructor/coach Roy Ellis and share a November weekend in comfortable, peaceful surroundings. Roy brought his skills as a teacher, psychologist and professional listener to encourage and guide us to be more comfortable and confident in our role as Threads of Life Volunteer Family Guides.

As we gathered we were able to renew acquaintances from previous Threads of Life activities or training events. And it was delightful to meet in person those

whose name and voice we only knew from our monthly VFG teleconferences.

Early in our sessions we discovered the fireplace and its circle of comfortable chairs. This became the ideal place to participate in Roy’s process of experiential learning – the place we asked our questions, shared our fears, were complimented on our desire for excellence. It was the place where he turned our natural tendency to be critical of our efforts into moments of discovery and growth. We explored the concepts of shame and guilt and how they can hinder our effectiveness. On more than one occasion he said, “It’s OK to fail. That’s how we learn.” We spent many hours sharing and discovering ways to recognize how the anxieties of those we listen to raise anxieties within ourselves. Anxiety is our natural body feeling about something – the unknown, the difficult, a fear. Anxiety is not the problem; it is a signal. It is a signal to take a deep breath and invite our mind into the situation. Then we can engage the issue and discover possibilities.

There were exercises to practice recognizing and responding to the feelings that come when we listen with our bodies and

our hearts. For me these are always amazing and thrilling experiences. As I share a part of my story the pain returns and the tears flow. In the midst of the emotion my listening partner gently and fearlessly asks the questions that let me discover an insight. I take another step forward on my grief journey. Listening to the comments at the end of the day I know others took another step forward on their journeys. It was a reminder that in spite of the years that have passed each of us may still have a wound needing salve.

Roy showed us tools that will help us be more effective as the capable, skilled caregivers we already are. It was reassuring to hear that we are highly competent in our work; listening and supporting someone who may feel overwhelmed or abandoned or misunderstood as they face the challenges of a future that has been thrust upon them.

The weekend was emotionally exhausting and at the same time wonderfully satisfying. My thanks to Threads of Life for providing this training.

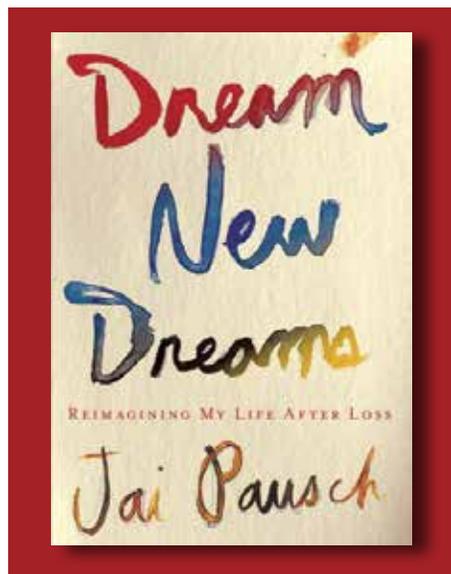
BOOKCLUB — Threads of Life readers, *join the club!*

The first Threads of Life book club meeting was held in February with a small group of avid readers discussing Randy Pausch’s *The Last Lecture*. The discussion was intimate and allowed for everyone to offer their thoughts on the book. Thanks to Marj Deyell for leading the group!

Please mark your calendars for the second session on May 13th at 7 p.m. Eastern time. The group has chosen to read *Dream New Dreams - Reimagining My Life After Loss* written by Jai Pausch, Randy’s widow, as a follow up to his book.

“Life is a precious gift, and I don’t intend to waste a day of it.” - Jai Pausch

In her memoir, Jai honestly shares the experience of watching her husband Randy Pausch succumb to terminal cancer and her grief journey after his death. She openly talks about how her life and roles



change from wife and caregiver to widow and single parent, and the struggle to come to terms with her devastating grief and loss.

From Randy’s example, Jai perseveres in finding her own path to honour his life and memory while creating her own new normal.

Members-Only Book Club meeting teleconference:

On Monday, May 13 at 7 p.m. Eastern Time the two-hour meeting will be once again led by Marj Deyell, Volunteer Family Guide and member of the Speakers Bureau, and will include discussions and reflections on *Dream New Dreams - Reimagining My Life After Loss*. To register, please send an email to bookclub@threadsoflife.ca.

Details on how to call in to the teleconference line will be sent to all registered participants before the scheduled date. If you have book suggestions for a future book club session please let us know.

What it means to be a Volunteer Family Guide

By Patti Penny and Barb Murray



Nine new volunteers joined the ranks of Threads of Life's Volunteer Family Guides in a training session in January. They included three living with life-altering injury, one affected by a fatality due to occupational disease, and five coping with losses due to workplace fatalities.

In January, nine Threads of Life volunteers from across the country completed their initial training to become Volunteer Family Guides. Two of the trainees wrote of their experience and reasons for becoming Volunteer Family Guides.

Most of us take for granted that when our loved ones leave for work, they will have a good day or perhaps a bad day or even a stressful day. Nobody expects them to be injured, contract a life-altering disease or be the victim of a workplace fatality.

Now imagine you receive a visit from the police telling you that your loved one has been involved in a workplace injury or fatality, or you are at the doctors' office, receiving a diagnosis of an occupational disease. Chaos, shock, confusion and disbelief all set in. You struggle to comprehend, but nothing makes sense. The words keep repeating in your head but you're in denial and insist that they are mistaken. It is a nightmare that you hope you will wake up from, but you don't. It is real and what has been said to you will never go away. Your life has now changed forever.

You appreciate that friends try to understand, but they do not know exactly how you feel. Sometimes family is just too close to the situation and that doesn't feel right after a while either. Family therapists

are also an outlet but you find yourself explaining who your loved one was, and the situation that you're trying to deal with.

And there is still something missing. Because this is a workplace injury, you struggle with both the grief of the loss and a unique frustrating anger at the situation. Waiting while the inquest happens, waiting for the court date to arrive only to have it adjourned again and again – all these things drag you back down into the pit of despair. You somehow manage, in your daze, to struggle through the first few months or more but nothing seems to get better and you realize that you have more questions than answers.

At some time during your journey, you're introduced to Threads of Life. You finally realize that you are not alone and that these incidents happen all too often. Through Threads of Life you are matched with a Volunteer Family Guide. The guides have all experienced workplace incidents and have 'walked in your shoes'. They understand what you are going through: the loss, the anger and the frustration. While awaiting the first phone call, you experience a sense of anticipation. You have tried everything else but now you're going to be talking to a person who has been where you are now.

These caring people are honest and compassionate and provide a comforting atmosphere. All that is important to them, that first time you talk, is you and your journey. They listen and guide you through the worst ordeal of your life. They offer suggestions, give you strength, courage and the wisdom they have learned from their own experiences. They know what you are experiencing and anticipate that your conversations will go through all the emotions. So, to have had a Volunteer Family Guide was and is the best way of helping you heal through your journey.

Becoming a Volunteer Family Guide is a great honour. To be able to help someone else is a very fulfilling experience – by taking a risk ourselves, we truly can make a difference in another person's life. To listen to them, guide them, give them courage and let them know that what they are feeling is completely normal now; to help them understand that it could be a very long process and may get worse before it gets better; to be that listening ear on the other end of the telephone; to be the comforting face across the coffee shop table; to be the hug in a time of immense sorrow; to ease the pain for another even if just for a moment or two – all these things are what it means to be a Volunteer Family Guide for Threads of Life.

Fundraising Goal
\$475,000

Step up this spring for families of workplace tragedy!

Participate in Steps for Life – as a walker, sponsor, donor or volunteer – and help Threads of Life honour the lives of those affected by workplace tragedy and raise vital dollars. All funds raised are used to support families through one-on-one peer guidance, regional family forums and this newsletter. You also allow our members to advocate for health and safety through our national speakers bureau.

Most walks take place May 5, 2013, but check the website for your date and location.

Saskatoon maps out success

The location is booked, the route is set and the committee is meeting. Now Saskatoon’s Steps for Life walk is looking for walkers.

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan is one of three brand new walk locations spread from coast to coast this year. In addition to Saskatoon, North Bay Ontario and Miramichi New Brunswick join the existing locations to bring the annual fundraising walk to 35 communities in 2013.

The walk in Saskatoon was born out of a partnership with the local CSSE (Canadian Society of Safety Engineers) branch, says walk chairman Bob Ocrane. Bob is a safety officer for JNE Welding, a CSSE member as well as a member of Threads of Life and a participant in the regional construction safety organization in Saskatoon. He recently won the CSSE award for outstanding service for the Saskatchewan Manitoba region, in part because of his work for Threads of Life.

“It’s all about safety,” no matter which organization is involved, Ocrane says. The CSSE branch and the regional construction safety committee started a barbecue

four years ago to raise money for Threads of Life, “and I thought, how else can we give back?” The walk will pull together all those organizations and will be the first for Saskatchewan.

The new walk committee gave out its first yellow t-shirt to Saskatoon’s mayor last spring, and Ocrane has visions of getting to 600 walkers – although maybe not in the first year. The biggest challenge he sees is “getting the word out; getting people excited.” But the committee will be cooking up some “big things” to get attention for their cause.

The Saskatoon walk will take place May 5 at the Diefenbaker Centre on the campus of the University of Saskatchewan.



Steps for Life Walk Locations

British Columbia

Sidney
Metro Vancouver

Alberta

Calgary
Edmonton
Fort McMurray
Lethbridge
Medicine Hat
Niton Junction
Red Deer

Saskatchewan

Saskatoon

Manitoba

Winnipeg

Ontario

Barrie
Durham Region
Guelph
Hamilton
London
Midland
Mississauga/Peel

Niagara

North Bay
Orillia
Ottawa
Sarnia
Sault Ste. Marie
Sudbury
Timmins
Toronto
Windsor

New Brunswick

Miramichi

Nova Scotia

Halifax
Windsor/West Hants

Prince Edward Island

Charlottetown

Newfoundland and Labrador

Corner Brook
St. John’s



Meet the Corporate Challenge 2013



What does commitment to workplace health and safety look like? Five enthusiastic coworkers who show their colleagues and their community that they want to help families affected by workplace tragedy,

and to announce that it's time to end workplace fatalities, life-altering injuries and occupational diseases. Take the challenge!

Step by step:

Step 1: Form a team of five coworkers who would like to raise donations for Steps for Life. Each Corporate Challenger team commits to raising a minimum of \$500, but the challenge is to be the team to raise the most in Canada!

Step 2: Pre-register in the Corporate Challenger. You can register online or by downloading a registration form at stepsforlife.ca. Registration is \$50 for the team or \$10 per team member. Registration is open until Friday, April 15 at 12 pm ET.

Step it up!

Decide who your team will challenge! Issue a friendly fundraising challenge to other businesses in your community, another office within your business, or even all Corporate Challenger teams!

Unleash the power of online fundraising! Read on to find out how you can maximize your fundraising success by giving your supporters the option of donating by cash, cheque, or online through your customized fundraising page!

Businesses, put your commitment into action

Steps for Life relies on the dedication of businesses which “walk the talk” when it comes to their health and safety commitment and support for their community. We would like to welcome back PCL Constructors Inc., Vale Mining and CannAmm Occupational Testing Services as national sponsors for Steps for Life 2013! We are grateful to have your continued support in bringing our prevention message to workplaces and communities across the country.

There are many sponsorship opportunities available at a local level, and many companies have already committed their support. Local sponsors can boost volunteers' fundraising efforts by donating lunch items, refreshments, tents, or even the use of children's games! Support from local sponsors makes it possible for communities to grow their Steps for Life events from year to year. To find out how you can support your local walk, contact your local planning committee using the contact information available at stepsforlife.ca.



Online and upward!

Online fundraising has emerged as one of the most efficient ways to raise money for a good cause. Threads of Life has made significant strides in the past few years, and 2013 is set to be another ground-breaking year! Every walker, including individual team members, will be able to develop and use their own online fundraising page. Read on to find out how you can increase your fundraising success and help promote your local Steps for Life walk.

1. It's important to customize your personal fundraising page. Your friends, family and coworkers want to know what Steps for Life is about and why it's important to you that they support you! Log in using the sign-in information used to set up your online registration. You can upload a photo and change the text on your page to reflect your own message.

2. Distribute widely! The more colleagues, business contacts, friends and family that receive the link to your fundraising page, the better! Try sending an email to contacts at work, and posting the link and an appeal for support on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+. You may be surprised who will make a donation to support you!

NEW! 3. Add donations that you receive as cash or cheque onto your fundraising page as 'pending' transactions. In the past, these donations couldn't be added to your page until after the walk. This year, you can add donations given to you as cash or cheques and track your full fundraising efforts on your online thermometer.

If you are not sure if you have your own online fundraising page, start by visiting your community's local landing page at stepsforlife.ca/locations. Then look for your team or your own individual page.

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CONSTRUCTION LEADERS



Cheryl Morrison

The essence of her adopted town is what makes Threads of Life volunteer Cheryl Morrison so committed – and it's what makes the Steps for Life walk she organizes a success.

“Once I heard about Threads of Life, then I was on board,” Cheryl says. “Being in Fort McMurray and knowing the nature of our work here, the whole community feels it when something happens.”

Cheryl is an account manager for CannAmm, one of the national sponsors for Steps for Life, and has lived in Fort McMurray for more than 30 years. Her husband works for one of the oil sands firms, and she has two adult sons – one who works south of Fort McMurray, and the other far away in China. She heard Threads of Life Executive Director Shirley Hickman speak at an event in 2011, and shortly afterwards agreed to chair the first-ever walk in Fort McMurray for 2012. It was only while planning the walk, reading the memory lane signs which tell the stories of families affected by workplace tragedy, that Cheryl realized how close this issue was to her family. A young cousin of hers had been killed years earlier. While the family suffered through the pain and loss, they never discussed the fact that the incident was work-related.

“We’re dealing with people who work out in the oil sands, but it’s not just heavy industry,” she says. “It’s all industries. If you think



Cheryl Morrison (left) and committee member Amy Lays staff the registration desk during the 2012 Fort McMurray Steps for Life walk

it’s not going to affect you, it will.”

In Fort McMurray, she adds, people live with the hazards posed by resource industry work, as well as the long stretch of highway connecting Fort Mac to Edmonton. Supporting Threads of Life seemed like a good fit, not just for her, but for the community. “People believe in this,” she says.

Running the Steps for Life walk along with her planning committee is Cheryl’s top volunteer commitment – she tries to take on only one major project at a time so she can devote her energy to it. In 2012 Fort McMurray set a goal to raise \$7,500 and ended up bringing in more than \$12,000. But Cheryl stresses the success of last year’s walk lies in the support from her co-chair Donna Solomon, the other committee members, and the community – local businesses chipped in to make sure Steps for Life hit the ground running.

For example, the committee found out just days before the walk that the washrooms at their walk site couldn’t be used because waterlines had frozen over the winter. So a local company quickly stepped in to supply porta-potties, no fuss and no questions asked.

“To me, that’s Fort McMurray,” Cheryl says – there’s commitment and a strong sense of community. “That’s why I love Fort McMurray; that’s why I made this my home.”

What's News?

Threads of Life members go the distance

Two Threads of Life family members and supporters are tackling marathons this spring to raise money for the organization and its programs:

Jennifer Bonin will travel to Italy and run the 2013 European Marathon in Trieste on May 5th. This date marks the 5th anniversary of the death of Jennifer’s boyfriend Gerry, who was lost at sea. Jennifer has been busy and actively fundraising through candle and bake sales, and lots of letters to the business community. A silent auction in November raised roughly \$5,000. Jennifer is getting closer to her goal of \$15,000 but can still use your support.

Diana Devine will complete the Ottawa Half-Marathon on May 26, in memory of her father. Proceeds from her race will be donated to Threads of Life.

Support both Jennifer and Diana by donating online at www.threadsoflife.ca.

Threads of Life staff and volunteers recognized with Queen’s Jubilee medals

For a small organization, Threads of Life has earned some big recognition.

Executive Director Shirley Hickman and two of our volunteers – board member Eleanor Westwood and volunteer Lisa Kadosa – are all recipients of the prestigious Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal.

“We are not a large organization, but we are able to accomplish so much because of our dedicated volunteers and partners,” says Hickman. “We are so proud of this recognition. I certainly feel that my medal is a credit not just to me, but to everyone involved with Threads of Life from its beginning in 2003 to today.”

The Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal was created to honour significant contributions and achievements by Canadians.

Raise a glass for Threads of Life at the LCBO

For the third year, Threads of Life is honoured to have been chosen by the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) for the coin box fundraising program in its stores. The LCBO chooses only 20 charities per year to support through this campaign, and last year donations to Threads of Life totaled more than \$10,000. For 2013, donations at the check-out counter will be channeled to Threads of Life from April 28 through May 25. Thank you to the LCBO – and its customers – for their support!



Levitt-Safety charity golf tournament

Levitt-Safety's annual charity golf tournament returns to the Lionhead Golf and Country Club in Brampton on June 12, 2013. Threads of Life will receive the proceeds from the silent auction and various fundraising raffles that day. For more information, email Marissa Wolicki at mwolicki@threadsoflife.ca or call 1-888-567-9490

New speakers take the stage



L to R: Ann Grant - Ontario, Bob Quarrell, Ontario, Vicki Dickson - Nova Scotia, Paulette Raymond - Nova Scotia, Michelle Glover - Alberta



L to R: Jasmine Fisher, Ontario, Heather Dahmer - Ontario, Donna Green - Nova Scotia, Charles Malysh - Alberta, Chantal Liberty - Ontario

In a weekend described as both intense and supportive, ten volunteers completed training in February to join Threads of Life's popular speakers bureau. The bureau provides family members with the chance to tell their stories to further the vision of eliminating workplace tragedies. Participants at the training developed their written stories and photographs into a presentation to be used for public speaking at schools, conferences and health and safety events.

The new speakers bring the total of speakers bureau members to more than 60 across Canada. In 2012 Threads of Life speakers made presentations to close to 5,000 people. Since the bureau started in 2005, more than 45,000 people have heard the message about health and safety.

Where will Threads of Life speakers be appearing this spring?

It's a busy spring for our speakers bureau. In addition to acting as family spokespeople for Steps for Life walks in many communities, they will be making presentations at conferences, safety days and other events across the country. Here is just a sample:

- University of Toronto Determinants of Health class, Mississauga, Ontario
- Health and safety conference in Timmins, Ontario
- Health and safety conference in Charlottetown, PEI
- Employee safety day at Arcelor Mittal, Hamilton, Ontario
- Day of Mourning ceremonies, Spruce Grove Alberta and Kentville Nova Scotia
- All-employee safety meetings at Nalcor Energy, Churchill Falls, Newfoundland
- Recreational facilities conference, Chester, Nova Scotia



Threads of Life welcomes Eva Marks MacIsaac

Threads of Life is pleased to welcome Eva Marks MacIsaac as our new Regional Development Coordinator Atlantic Canada and Quebec. Eva has worked in the not-for-profit sector for more than 25 years supporting community, provincial and national associations with their fundraising goals, volunteer development, and marketing strategies. She is a prior executive director, board/committee member and a professional trainer and facilitator.

For the past 18 years Eva has had the privilege of being involved with the Canadian Military Family Resource Centre; serving nine years as an executive director and 11 years as Field Operations Manager for Directorate Military Family Services. During that time she most enjoyed working with military spouses who have committed their time and talents towards making the MFSP one of the best in the world.

Eva looks forward to her new position as Regional Development Coordinator. "It is a pleasure to be able to continue my professional career with another great national organization committed to supporting families and the volunteers who help achieve our mission."

Eva adds she is a lifetime resident of Nova Scotia, a mother of two amazing daughters and wife of "the world's best husband for the past 26 years".

We welcome your stories, poems, photos or drawings. Email to: shaldane@threadsoflife.ca

2013 Upcoming Events

Steps for Life - Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy
Sunday May 5, 2013 in most communities

Jennifer Bonin European Marathon
May 5, 2013, Trieste Italy

Diane Devine Ottawa Half-Marathon
May 26, 2013, Ottawa, ON

Atlantic Family Forum
May 31-June 2, 2013, Atlantica Hotel,
Oak Island, NS

Levitt-Safety Charity
Golf Tournament
June 12, 2013, Brampton ON

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Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support

Threads of Life is a registered charity dedicated to supporting families along their journey of healing who have suffered from a workplace fatality, life-altering illness or occupational disease. Threads of Life is the Charity of Choice for many workplace health and safety events. Charitable organization business #87524 8908 RR0001.

MISSION

Our mission is to help families heal through a community of support and to promote the elimination of life-altering workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths.

VISION

Threads of Life will lead and inspire a culture shift, as a result of which work-related injuries, illnesses and deaths are morally, socially and economically unacceptable

VALUES

We believe that:

Caring: Caring helps and heals.

Listening: Listening can ease pain and suffering.

Sharing: Sharing our personal losses will lead to healing and preventing future devastating work-related losses.

Respect: Personal experiences of loss and grief need to be honoured and respected.

Health: Health and safety begins in our heads, hearts and hands, in everyday actions.

Passion: Passionate individuals can change the world.

HOW TO REACH US

Toll-free: 1-888-567-9490

Fax: 1-519-685-1104

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