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Sharing energy and stories



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Bill Stunt

Welcome to this edition of the Threads of Life newsletter. I hope you and your families are finding time to take advantage of the warmth and sunshine that the summer months offer.

Many of you will have taken part in our annual Steps for Life walk in May. Our deepest thanks to all who participated and helped make this year's event the most successful ever. The walk gets bigger and attracts more and more much-needed attention to the issues around workplace safety every year, thanks to the hard work of our volunteers and participants. Inside the pages of this edition we'll give you some of the details of how this year's event unfolded.

The Threads of Life Speakers Bureau is an amazing resource. We have many talented speakers in the ranks - speakers who are able to rise above their personal pain and sorrow and deliver thought-provoking and important messages about the vital issue of workplace safety.

Some of you will have had the opportunity to hear one of our most gifted and powerful speakers, Kevin Bonnis. He spoke at the Central Family Forum a few years ago and he made an indelible

impression on the rapt audience. Kevin has an almost unbelievable story of a horrifying workplace accident that left him severely injured. Kevin's story is both tragic and uplifting. His journey back to both physical and mental health is deeply inspiring. There is a feature story about Kevin in the newsletter.

As always this issue will feature the personal stories of families who have had their lives permanently altered by a workplace related death, injury or illness. You'll read about a woman's 12-year struggle to come to grips with the loss of her partner due to a fall on a construction site.

In another tragic story, a mother both celebrates and mourns her beloved son. Dealing with the loss has been difficult. Equally difficult is waiting three years (and counting) for the legal system to deliver answers to the many questions she has about the accident that cost her son's life. Many of us know that particular anguish all too well. Sharing our stories – whether here in Threads or through the Speakers Bureau or other means – helps us all to honour our loved ones and build safer workplaces.

The guy everyone wanted to be around

Luke Penny dies in trench collapse

by Patti Penny



After working in Vancouver, in 2010 Luke Penny had just started a new job back home in Ontario to be close to family.

LUKE Patrick Penny was born on April 17, 1984. Sibling Ryan was so excited to be a big brother. Born only 19 months apart, Ryan and Luke did everything together. Our family was completed five years later when our third child was born, a girl we named Trish. Luke always looked up to his big brother Ryan and always took care of his little sister Trish.

As Luke grew out of babyhood, he developed into a wonderful little boy. From a young age, Luke was very easy going. He showed sensitivity rarely seen in one so young – especially a boy! He was truly happy, good natured and easily pleased, traits that he carried into adulthood.

From the time they were small, Ryan and Luke spent a lot of time playing together and helping me take care of their little sister. Whether it was toy cars, riding bikes, trying to climb trees, or whatever else they did, they did it together. They even had chicken pox at the same time. As a family we used to go fishing at a local pond. While we were teaching the

kids to cast from shore, I remember thinking the fish were safer in the water than we were standing near Luke and Ryan as they swung the rods and hooks around, catching tree branches and everything else near them. Even as teens, the two boys loved spending time together playing video games or street hockey.

Trish adored and idolized her big brother Luke. He was her best friend. He would read her stories, play and joke with her, and would dress up in weird costumes just to make her laugh.

Throughout his school years one of the adjectives used to describe Luke was “charming”. Luke could always charm himself into and out of anything. As a practical joker and the funny guy of the class, he could make anyone laugh at any time, including teachers, even if they were angry with him for any reason. He was very good at this as he would do the same to me and his father. Luke was a caring and gentle individual whose genuine nature showed through his bravado, and people were inherently drawn to him. He was the guy everyone wanted to be around.

However, don’t get me wrong; life wasn’t always easy with Luke. Whenever he went out, we lived in constant worry as he was prone to be a daredevil. He would try anything, any time, and anywhere. He rarely turned down a dare.

On May 19th as he left for work, I said “bye, have a good day, love you”. He said “love you too”. Little did I know those would be the last words I would ever speak to my son or hear from him.

His dad remembers taking the boys tobogganing, and while older brother Ryan would walk up and down the hill checking all angles of the bumps, trying to determine the best approach for descending the hill and what could go wrong, Luke would be on the toboggan laughing and flying all the way down the hill. The more bumps there were and the faster he could go, the

better. He also enjoyed snowboarding and skateboarding. When he went snowboarding with his best friend, we would inevitably get a phone call to come and pick Luke up. More times than not, the voice on the other end of the line told us “he’s in the first aid building”!

Luke was a true gentleman - he would always hold the door open for anyone in any store or restaurant. He would start my car in the cold winter mornings, and would be the first to come out and help when I arrived home with groceries.

When I was working at a golf course, arriving home late on many nights, Luke would call and tell me he would wait up for me. We forged a special bond on those late nights as the two of us would sit at the kitchen table, drinking tea and talking until the wee hours of the morning. He would tell me everything about his life and dreams and the goals he wanted to achieve.

Finishing high school, Luke got a job working for a lawn maintenance company and really enjoyed the outdoor work. He soon decided that seasonal work wasn’t in his best interests, and went after a permanent full time job offering more money and security. We had always told him he could do anything he set his mind to. Though he was never a fan of schoolwork, his true potential showed up when he entered the work force.

He found himself at an entry level with a contractor supply company, selling nuts and bolts, but didn’t stay in that position for very long. He exhibited a newly-discovered talent for math and numbers, and along with his charm, he could sell just about anything to anybody. Within a couple of years he held an assistant manager position and in July 2008 the company

offered him a contract in Vancouver to manage a store that was failing. We were so proud of him. We encouraged him to take this opportunity.

A few months before he left for Vancouver, Luke sent me an e-mail. In it, he told me how proud he was to be a part of this family. That he idolized his sister the way she idolized him; that his brother showed him growing up wasn't so bad; that his father taught him that hard work pays off and taught him to be the man he was becoming. For me he said he had known that I was always there to talk to and was never too busy for him. He stated that "My family is responsible for who I am today; dedicated, strong, devoted, polite, and the list just goes on". During the two years he was in Vancouver, he phoned home every day to talk. And yes, he was a mama's boy and had no qualms about telling that to anyone.

After he fulfilled his contract in Vancouver he decided to come home in March 2010, much to our family's and his friends' delight. He was home in time to celebrate his 26th birthday.

In a few weeks Luke managed to find a job which he was again enjoying - outdoor work. He told me he wouldn't be moving too far away as he loved being home and being around family. After a quick trip back to Vancouver to tie up some loose ends, he went back to work on May 18th.

On May 19th as he left for work, I said "bye, have a good day, love you". He said "love you too". Little did I know those would be the last words I would ever speak to my son or hear from him. This day drastically changed our family's lives forever, as well as the lives of many others. Luke Patrick Penny, our second born and the middle child of three, was killed in a work place fatality.

About 4:00 p.m. on May 19th I received a phone call at work from my husband, Rod. I was told that the police were at our door where my daughter was home alone. They asked her to call my husband and me to come home because they wanted

to speak to the family together. We both got home within the half hour and our son Ryan came shortly after. We suspected the worst, something seriously wrong when they wanted to see all of us together. We tried not to think or discuss what it might be. One thing we didn't even consider was a workplace death. He was at work, he was supposed to be safe. Little did we know. The police finally arrived back at our house a few hours later and as soon as I looked at them, I knew.

Luke had been working for a basement



The Penny family on vacation – Patti (centre) with Rod and their three children

water-proofing company for three or four weeks. He had never worked for this type of company before. To our knowledge Luke was given no formal training.

His company had been hired to water-proof the foundation of a garage less than one year old. Luke was working in the trench. Apparently without warning, along an existing crack in the garage foundation, the wall collapsed out from the bottom, trapping and killing him instantly. We were told he had died of Traumatic Asphyxiation. It all happened so fast, we were told that Luke still had his tools in his hands when his body was recovered and didn't even have a chance to protect himself.

To this day we still haven't heard the whole story or all of the facts behind this tragic incident. Three years later, his case has not made it to court. We do keep asking questions. Could Luke's life have been saved? Is there anything that could

have prevented this tragedy? Did he have enough training? We may never know the answers to these questions.

Because of this tragedy my family was now living the worst nightmare of our lives. Our lives have changed forever. We lost a son, brother, grandson, nephew and a best friend to many.

I was adamant that this was not really happening. It wasn't supposed to be like this. Our family was together again after two years and with summer fast approaching, we were looking forward to family barbecues and pool parties, and having lots of people in and out of the house. After all, Luke was home to stay. It was supposed to be Luke reconnecting with family and friends, but instead, we found ourselves looking at cemetery plots and planning a funeral.

That August, Ryan proposed to his girlfriend of six years. Luke's death had a huge impact on him and he knew Luke had been in favour of them getting married. Despite Luke's absence at the wedding in October 2011, it was still a beautiful affair with many friends and family from all over

Canada and the U.S. Luke was not there to stand alongside his brother for this happiest of occasions. It was a bittersweet day for me. I was very happy for my son Ryan and new daughter-in-law Laura but I missed Luke tremendously. Luke would have loved having a new sister in his life. Our family will never have the opportunity to see the joy in Luke's eyes or the smile on his face when he would marry or the happiness of his children being born and being the best father we know he would have been. His father and I will never have grandchildren by Luke.

Luke would have been a fabulous uncle, but nieces and nephews will only know their Uncle Luke by family stories, pictures and memories, all because he went to work one day. To this day and forever, my last thought before I sleep is of my son Luke, and he is my first thought every morning. I love him so much, still do and always will. He was, is, and always will be my son.

Five minutes for the world to crumble

Blaine Drew: Wonderful man with a huge heart, killed in 18-foot fall

by *Sherry Smith*



Blaine was working putting up rafters for a building on a farm in Saskatchewan.

Friday September 15, 2000 was an unseasonably hot day. As I was driving home from work I couldn't shake a feeling of unease and urgency that was crowding my thoughts. Something was wrong. It was the weekend and I should be excited that my partner would be home for two whole days after being away all week, but all I knew was that I had to hurry home and get ready to go pick him up. Strange, because he always travelled with his brother, and would be home after dark. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't shake that feeling.

A vehicle pulled into the yard at 6:30 pm and I went to the door expecting a huge hug and kiss. Instead I found my brother-in-law and he was alone. My stomach sunk to my

toes. Without giving many details of what happened, he told me that there had been an accident and Blaine was dead. He turned away and left, saying that he had to go and

meet his other brother so they could tell their mother what had happened. It took all of five minutes for my entire world to crumble, and I didn't know what had happened, other than there had been a fall. I only remember bits and pieces of the next hours and days – notifying his children, my family, our friends; people coming and going, planning the funeral, asking a co-worker's husband to sing our song, "Forever and Ever Amen" by Randy Travis at the service and picking out his clothes for the last time. I felt like I was wading through syrup, struggling to take a step forward and then being sucked back into the thick, sticky mire. I couldn't sleep, eat or even cry, I was just numb. It couldn't possibly be real. One of the worst moments was when I had to pick out a casket at the funeral home. It was too much to bear. It had to be a sick joke. I had no idea of the extra heartache and hardships that were to come as a result of his death, and I'm sure it's better that way. I wouldn't have been able to cope if I'd have known what was to come.

Blaine Dennis Drew was 52 years old and we had been together for five and a half years. He was born on July 31, 1948 and died on September 15, 2000. We met on May 26, 1995 and had an instant connection. It felt as if we had known each other all our lives and within a very short time we became a couple. He was a wonderful man with a huge heart who would do anything for anyone. Everyone else always came first, especially his son,

loving and we were happily planning a future together. He was vain about his hair – a typical Leo, very proud of his mane. He loved having big family gatherings when we would play cards until the wee hours of the night so I buried him with his reading glasses and seven nickels so he could continue to play his favorite card game. The coffee was always on, and he loved to eat, and always told everyone he was going to die with a full stomach. Unfortunately, he died just before lunch. We lived beside the main rail line in Pense, just outside of Regina and the sound of the train was a big part of our life. I've always loved the train and to this day, every



Sherry and Blaine met in 1995 and were planning a future together

I only remember bits and pieces of the next hours and days – notifying his children, my family, our friends; people coming and going, planning the funeral, asking a co-worker's husband to sing our song, "Forever and Ever Amen" by Randy Travis at the service and picking out his clothes for the last time.

time I hear one I am reminded of our time together and that he's still with me. He's buried in a small rural cemetery, close to his father, where he looks out onto the

daughter, and mother. My family embraced him wholeheartedly and he quickly became a huge part of all our lives. He was funny, stubborn, loyal,

time I hear one I am reminded of our time together and that he's still with me. He's buried in a small rural cemetery, close to his father, where he looks out onto the

open prairie and you can hear the train as it goes by.

Blaine had a very playful side, and I never knew what he was going to do next. Once when he came to pick me up for a date, his mother was sitting beside him in the front seat, so I had to ride in the back. Another time at A&W we were given the number five (my birthdate) so they could bring out our order. They never got the number back. He carried it with him in his wallet, and now I carry it with me. When he was frustrated, he'd say "Can you bend over and grab your ankles so I can kick your butt?" He was always doing silly things like acting up in store check-out lines, or smiling and waving at elderly couples in traffic to see if they could figure out who he was!

As time went on the details of his last day became clearer. Blaine and his brother were working on a farm in Val Marie, Saskatchewan putting up the rafters for a building and they hadn't put up the scaffolding. They had worked together for years and had never used fall protection, so didn't have any on this job. Blaine was alone on one side of the building, and with only the two of them on the job site, no one witnessed what happened, but we think that he fell from the rafters, 18 feet to the ground. Because the site was in the far south-west corner of the province, the ambulance took two hours to get there from Swift Current and that long to get back to the city. He died of crush injuries to his heart and lungs shortly after reaching the hospital.

His brother didn't have WCB coverage and was very upset when WCB and OH&S contacted him about the accident. He tried to prove that they were partners in the business, not employer/employee, but was unable to. The final OH&S report stated that he, as the employer, was at fault because of the lack of fall protection. He did have to pay for WCB coverage, but OH&S didn't lay any charges or fines.

After the funeral, when everyone went home to their normal lives, I was so lost – I didn't have a normal life any longer and I didn't know what to do, so I went back to work two weeks after Blaine died. I barely functioned, just went to work and home every day. I couldn't sleep or eat and didn't

want to talk to anyone. Day and night, for months I sat in the dark in Blaine's favorite chair in the living room. Finally in February 2001 I took some time off work, returning gradually after a few weeks. In

have been like. I miss Blaine so much, even though I feel him with me every day, and on the bad ones I can hear him telling me to "bend over and grab my ankles." I wouldn't give up even a minute of our time

Grief is not linear, it comes in waves, when you least expect it. There is no beginning, middle or end. Grief does lessen with time, but it doesn't disappear. It's been 12 years and my heart still aches when I think of him.

some ways it was better at work; at least there was something to keep my mind busy.

People mean well, but hearing things

together. I have a new normal now and am stronger than I ever was. I know Blaine and my angel army are guiding me, some days more than others. I'd give everything



Sherry Smith participated in Saskatchewan's first Steps for Life – Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy event this spring.

like: "he's still with you; you'll be together again some day; take it one day at a time; God only gives you what you can handle; you're strong, this'll make you stronger; the good ones die young; get back to your normal routine; you need to move on; he wouldn't want you to be alone; time heals; it gets easier; you were so lucky to have the time you had together; or you need to clear out his things" only made the pain worse, no matter the good intentions. They didn't understand and I didn't know how to help them understand.

Grief is not linear, it comes in waves, when you least expect it. There is no beginning, middle or end. Grief does lessen with time, but it doesn't disappear. It's been 12 years and my heart still aches when I think of him and what our future would

I have to go back to having him here and feeling his arms around me, but I'm thankful for the time we had together, no matter how short it was, and for everything I had, everything I have, the stronger relationships I have with my friends and family, the people I've met and everything I've learned from this journey.

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



Speakers Bureau volunteer gains sweet rewards

by Johanna Leroux

Johanna Leroux has been a volunteer in Threads of Life's speakers bureau since 2007, and has travelled far and wide to meet the requests of different organizations and events. This spring, she travelled by plane and helicopter to Churchill Falls Newfoundland at the request of Nalcor Energy, to help conduct a series of safety meetings and a mini-Steps for Life walk. The safety officer at Nalcor had heard Johanna speak at a conference and was willing to bring her all the way from Ontario to make an impact on the workforce. Here, Johanna writes about one of her previous journeys:

One of the richest and sweetest things that I do is my volunteer work with Threads of Life.

My work as a Volunteer Family Guide has helped me tremendously along my own journey of healing after the loss of my son to a workplace tragedy, but it has also allowed me to assist others navigating both the grief process and the system that all of us touched by workplace tragedy are forced to cope with.

My work with the Speakers Bureau has at times been difficult – it can be difficult to share your story with people you know, let alone with a group of strangers – but always immensely rewarding. I have been fortunate enough to speak to a vast number of people from many different industries all over Eastern/Central Canada and even in the United States, and hopefully make an impact on the way they view workplace safety and injury prevention.

Both of these are rewarding enough on

their own, but I have been fortunate enough to have been asked to speak at a number of functions and events that have allowed me to travel to places I never would have had the opportunity to see, to share the story of my son and to hopefully inspire a positive change in attitude toward workplace safety – the “culture shift” which we all so fervently desire to influence.

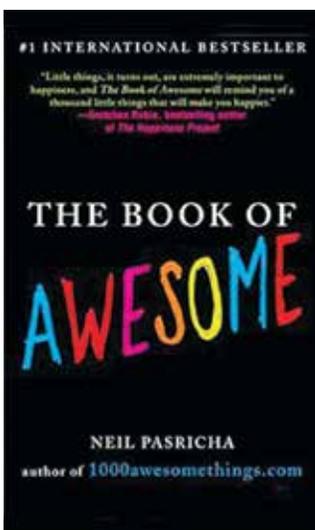
My very first such adventure was a trip to a small town in southern Texas to speak at one of the staff health and safety days for a large global manufacturing company. When they talk about “Southern hospitality” they are not kidding! My hosts made the utmost of my brief time with them, ensuring that I was taken out to dinner to try some Louisiana/East Texas specialties – fresh crawfish and fried alligator! Luckily I have a pretty adventurous palate, but both were fantastic! The morning of my presentation I was taken on a tour of a local bayou and through the lovely, small,

historic town I was staying in, where I got to visit a small plantation house and see the spectacular magnolia trees in bloom. They are truly magnificent. For lunch, prior to my speaking engagement, I was taken to a tiny, local cafe called the Old Orange Cafe & Catering Company situated in a historic dairy building, where I was treated to my first Shrimp Po’ Boy sandwich, which I have never forgotten, and a slice of the most delicious, most scrumptious, most decadent pie that had ever crossed my lips.

I was so impressed with that slice of pie that I spent months, and I do mean months, trying to recreate it at home. I googled recipes on the internet, pored over cookbooks from the library and probably made 20 pies, none of which lived up to my memory of that slice of pie from the Old Orange Cafe. So I decided to take a chance and email the chef from the restaurant and make a heartfelt plea from a Canadian displaced-Southerner-at-heart who may never again have

—continued top of page 7

BOOKCLUB—Awesome read for summer book club meeting



The next book club meeting will be on August 12th and a lighter choice for summer has been selected: *The Book of Awesome* by Neil Pasricha. This humorous read was developed from Neil's very popular blog, 1000awesomethings.com. The blog and book remind readers to not always take life too seriously. It is the kind of book that deserves to have LOL written in full because it truly has the ability to make you laugh out loud! While not all of his list of awesome things may resonate with you, there are bound to be many that will.

Perhaps some of these? • Getting breakfast in bed • Finally figuring out how your hotel faucet works • Solving the Wheel of Fortune puzzle before the people on the show • Finding money in your old coat pocket • Staring out at calm water • Catching somebody singing in their car

and sharing a laugh with them.

August Book Club meeting teleconference:

The next book club meeting will be held on Monday, August 12th from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time and will be led by Susanne Wilson. Susanne is both a member of the Speakers Bureau and a Volunteer Family Guide. Thank you Susanne!

Start your own list of awesome and join the discussion. Call-in details for the teleconference will be sent to all registered participants before the scheduled book club date. To register, please send an email to bookclub@threadsoflife.ca. Please send us your suggestions for the next read!

the opportunity to experience the total state of nirvana his pie had transported me to that day.

My tear-stained email must have plucked at his gentle southern heart-strings, because it worked!

So I share with you, because of all that you have shared of your lives and your stories – as volunteers, as family members, and as community partners - his recipe for the richest, sweetest pie that will ever cross your lips... The Old Orange Cafe Buttermilk Pie. I don't know how to describe it... It is somewhat the consistency of a good custard pie, with a similar flavour to the custard that is the basis for a good pecan pie or butter tart. But indescribably better. There really is no adequate way to convey the taste and texture, but it is luscious.



Old Orange Cafe Buttermilk Pie

(From Chef David Claybar's email)

A stand mixer or hand mixer – either works fine.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 x 9-inch deep dish pie crust
- 3 eggs
- 1 ½ c granulated sugar
- ½ c margarine (melted by not hot)
- ½ c butter milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine the eggs and sugar, and "cream" together until the mixture begins to lighten in colour.
2. Add melted margarine and "cream" together until well combined.
3. Add buttermilk and "cream" until well combined.
4. Add vanilla and stir to incorporate. Pour into pie shell and bake.

Convection: 275°F for 45 minutes to 1 hour or til set.

Conventional: 350°F for 1 hour or til set.

The pie should still "jiggle" a bit, but is set.

Allow to come to room temperature, then refrigerate until cold before slicing.

This pie is a little taste of heaven. Enjoy!

The Atlantic Canada Family Forum May 31 - June 2



Sometimes even family doesn't quite understand what you are going through, so meeting others who are going through the same thing as I am was a wonderful experience. I have never ever really talked about the death with others so the session for widows provided a great sense of relief and companionship.

- Coreen Tarenta – new attendee

I went with a lot of skepticism not being sure if it was the place for me, however I found it very comforting and rewarding. I really enjoyed the sessions and found it helpful to be able to share with others who were experiencing the same emotions as me.

-June Garland – new attendee

My wife and I really enjoyed everything! Audrey's sessions were fantastic! She explained some aspects of my condition in a way that I had never heard before. There was lots of practical helpful information. I really felt listened to.

-Aubrey Coombs – returning attendee



More than
\$575,000
raised!

Making strides

Steps for Life – Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy 2013 smashed through its goals, pushing the total raised to more than \$575,000 at 33 events, with more than 4600 walkers participating.

Steps for Life raises both funds for Threads of Life programs and services, and awareness of health and safety. Most of the walks were held on Sunday May 5, to kick off North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week.

The weather gods smiled and brought beautiful weather to complement the bright yellow Steps for Life T-shirts. Many communities topped their previous attendance and fundraising records, as they continue to raise the profile of workplace health and safety across Canada.

Steps for Life helps Threads of Life reach out to new partners and supporters each year. But even more important, it's a means to reach new families, who need to know there is an organization whose purpose is to help them heal from the life-altering experience of workplace injury, illness, or death.

“While Threads of Life provides a safe place for these families to land,” says Threads of Life Executive Director Shirley Hickman,

“Steps for Life is about honouring those who have been devastated by workplace tragedy, while working together with all of our partners, including government, businesses, health and safety professionals, unions, and families. Working together, we will see a societal shift to one which does not accept workplace tragedy as a ‘cost of doing business’.”

Thank you to the hundreds of volunteers – and especially, the planning committee members – across the country who made this years’ Steps for Life events such a success. Your dedication to raising awareness about the importance of occupational health and safety continues to inspire and humble. We could not do this without you.

Thank you to the national and local sponsors, walkers, and donors who have helped Threads of Life to raise awareness and funds, both of which are needed to continue to provide family support programs and services to families affected by workplace tragedy.

If you would like to volunteer, sponsor, or otherwise provide support for the Steps for Life walk in your community, please contact us at 1-888-567-9490. It’s never too early to start planning for next year! See you in May 2014!



Highlights from the Walk

- We welcomed two brand new communities, Miramichi, NB and Saskatoon, SK, and welcomed back North Bay, ON. All 3 communities exceeded their fundraising goals!
- Mini-walks are a great way for a few passionate individuals to participate in Steps for Life and contribute to raising awareness in your community without holding a full-fledged Steps for Life walk. This year, mini-walks were held in Greenwood NS (hosted by Construction Engineering unit, 14 Wing Greenwood), Sydney, NS, and Churchill Falls (hosted by Nalcor Energy), NL. The three mini-walks collectively raised more than \$5,000!
- The reigning community fundraising champion, Edmonton, beat themselves again, with a fundraising total of over \$80,000!
- This year we saw a growth of 127% in online donations compared to last year’s walk. Wow!
- In an unprecedented display of local support, Lethbridge, AB had more than 1,200 walkers.
- Federal and Provincial Cabinet Ministers attended walks across the country, along with representatives from provincial workers’ compensation boards, many mayors and other community leaders.



Alta-Fabulous! Reigning champs Win 2013 corporate Challenger

Teams from across the country once again challenged other businesses in the Steps for Life Corporate Challenger. In a nation-wide fundraising competition, Alberta teams cleaned house for the second year! Nisku, Alberta's Alta-Fab Structures again claimed first place among all the Corporate Challenger teams. Alta-Fab Team 1 raised more than \$15,390! Two other Edmonton teams, PCL Intracon Power Inc. and Alta-Fab Team 2 came in second and third place, respectively. PCL teams in Calgary, Vancouver, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, and Halifax also challenged each other and made an impressive contribution.

Honourable mentions go out to two companies who reached far and wide to spread the safety spirit: Aecon and Bird Construction. Aecon issued a challenge to their many companies and subsidiaries, with teams participating across the country. In Winnipeg, Bird Construction entered four teams. All Aecon and Bird Construction teams deserve honourable mentions for raising awareness of the importance of workplace health and safety in their community, and across the country.

Thank you to all of the teams who entered the 2013 Corporate Challenge! Your enthusiasm, dedication and passion for workplace health and safety is appreciated. You've made us proud!

Congratulations to our 2013 Corporate Challenger Winners!



Alta-Fab Structures Ltd.
(Edmonton)



PCL Intracon Power Inc.
(Edmonton)



Alta-Fab Structures Ltd.
(Edmonton)

Honourable Mentions

Aecon / Bird Construction



National Sponsors

A special thank you to our national sponsors. Your support has helped us to raise the profile of Steps for Life across the country.



Community Sponsors

2013 has brought more community-level sponsorship and support than ever before. Thank you for showing your safety spirit and leadership!

Champions

- Alberta Common Ground Alliance
- George Wellington Esquire Club
- KGMH International
- Province of Nova Scotia – Department of Labour and Advanced Education
- SDS-Safety Design Strategies
- WHSCC (Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission) NL

Community Leaders

- Apache Canada Ltd.
- ArcelorMittal Hamilton East
- BFI
- Black & McDonald Ltd. – Power Generation

- Brigus Gold Corporation, Black Fox Mine
- Carpenters Millwrights College & Local 579
- Canadian Auto Workers (CAW)
- CCL Container
- Claybar Contracting
- Cratex Industries Ltd.
- CRSC Disaster Kleenup
- Canadian Society of Safety Engineering (CSSE) – Hamilton & District Chapter
- Flint Packaging Products Ltd.
- Goldcorp
- Golder & Associates Ltd.
- Hard-Co Sandy Gravel
- Harris Rebar
- Home Depot of Canada Inc.
- Industrial Safety Trainers Inc.
- Kubota Metal Corporation
- M. Pidherney's Trucking Ltd.
- Morguard Investments Ltd.
- Ontario Power Generation (OPG)
- Parkland Regional Safety Committee
- Pattison Sign Group
- Suncor Energy
- Workers Compensation Board of PEI

Kevin Bonnis

Threads of Life could not provide all of its services and support to family members as well as actively promote prevention in the community without the vital volunteers who give their time, energy and expertise so willingly. Kevin Bonnis is one of those volunteers.

Kevin found Threads of Life in 2010 when he was recruited as part of the organizing committee for the first Barrie Steps for Life walk. Kevin was introduced as a student in the Georgian College Health and Safety Management program. It was not for some months that it was shared that Kevin was actually a family member who had been impacted by a life-altering injury in 2003, the same year that Threads of Life was founded. Kevin can remember lying in his hospital bed as he recovered and thinking that an organization to help families was needed. He can still remember that feeling of being stranded as if on an island surrounded by sharks. He can remember wanting to be rescued. He can remember feeling very alone.

In February 2011, Kevin took the speakers bureau training as he was to be the family spokesperson that year for the Barrie walk. Before he left the training that weekend Kevin had already been booked to speak to a class of 200 medical students at University of Toronto. He has now shared his story with more than 2000 people through the speakers bureau and the walks. Kevin is increasingly requested as a speaker and always comes through, even with very last minute requests.

Most recently, Kevin participated in the Volunteer Family



Kevin Bonnis (with son Avery and wife Debb) cuts the ribbon to start the Steps for Life walk in Niagara this year. Kevin was acting as family spokesman for the walk.

Guide training. He realized that he had taken on this role even before he decided to take the training. People recognized in him that essential quality of someone who is willing to listen. Many times he had already heard a grateful voice full of relief say how good it was to just know that you are not alone.

Kevin has the drive and call to action, as we say in the speakers bureau, to promote the importance of safety to employers and workers while being able to understand and simply listen to others who have shared the path of workplace tragedy. Ultimately, Kevin like all of us does not wish for any others to have to join the family of Threads of Life.

When asked why volunteering with Threads of Life is important to him, Kevin humbly replied that it is rewarding and provides him with a sense of making a difference.

He is honest that he is still angry but he wants to use that energy to make change. Kevin shared that “Threads of Life is a good organization full of good people and every one of them tries to break my heart.” For all who meet him, Kevin is one of those people that you are proud to know but wish you didn’t because of what brought him to Threads of Life.

All of us at Threads of Life are grateful to Kevin as well as his family who support him in his volunteer roles and efforts. These simple words are not enough; however, thank you Kevin, for all that you do. To read Kevin’s personal story, see the Spring 2011 issue of *Threads*.



Counting the hours

You’ve just spent hours – maybe even days or weeks – volunteering for Threads of Life. And now someone asks you to fill out a form totaling up the time you’ve donated. It’s probably the last thing you feel like doing, but it’s of critical importance to the organization.

In 2012, volunteers reported giving close to 4,500 hours of their time to Threads of Life, whether helping to organize the Steps for Life walk, contributing to our board of directors, or serving as speakers bureau members or volunteer family guides. We know many more volunteer hours went unreported. The hours recorded

are part of the \$214,818 the organization received in “in-kind” donations last year. Different from monetary donations, “in-kind” donations include gifts of time, services, meeting space, food for events and discounts on the cost of services.

Threads of Life keeps track of these gifts as part of our financial reporting to our funders and our members. Many grant organizations ask us to demonstrate that we have public involvement and engaged community members. Counting up volunteer hours is one way we can answer that question.

So please, take a few moments to let us know your volunteer hours. You can complete the form on our web site, or print one out and fax or email it in to us. You’ll find the information you need at: <http://threadsoflife.ca/donate/in-kind-donations/>. Think of it as one more gift you can give to Threads of Life – with our thanks!



The goalie stops a shot during a fundraising ball hockey tournament in Spruce Grove Alberta.

Thank you for being a friend

Threads of Life's friends and supporters work across the country – and even across the sea! – to raise money to support our programs and services. Here are a few of their recent accomplishments:

- Jennifer Bonin completed the 2013 European Marathon in Trieste Italy on May 5th, to commemorate the death of her boyfriend and his father, both commercial fishermen.
- Diana Devine ran the Ottawa marathon May 12 in honour of her father, Rico Iannucci, who was killed when his backhoe malfunctioned and fell over an embankment. Diana raised \$2,615.
- In conjunction with Day of Mourning events in Spruce Grove

Alberta, a ball hockey tournament raised \$4,860.

- The Municipality of York, Ontario, organized a walk for its staff and raised \$550.
- The LCBO (Liquor Control Board of Ontario) chose Threads of Life as one of 28 charities to support through coin boxes at checkout counters at more than 620 stores across Ontario. Last year more than \$9,500 was collected for Threads of Life at LCBO donation boxes.
- Levitt-Safety held their golf tournament at the Lionhead Golf and Country Club on June 21. We are thankful for the proceeds of the silent auction.

Mark's puts best foot forward for safety

Mark's Work Wearhouse opened its very first store in Calgary back in 1977, offering an assortment of high quality work wear products for industrial workers in Alberta. In the 35 years since then, Mark's has firmly established itself as an iconic Canadian brand, growing its store network to more than 380 locations. Mark's has also expanded its product offering to casual apparel and footwear and a few years ago it even dropped the "Work Wearhouse" from its name in recognition of the fact that it had grown into more than just a work wear retailer. That does not mean that Mark's has, or ever will, forget its roots. In fact, Mark's took the very same technologies that made its work wear famous and adapted them for everyday apparel, further expanding its reputation as one of Canada's most innovative retailers.

Even with the "work" gone from its name, Mark's holds strong to its position as Canada's number one work wear retailer and is still the most trusted brand for Canadians who want quality, durable products to help keep them safe and protected in the workplace. One of Mark's most well known innovations is the Tarantula Anti-slip technology that's built into many of its boots. This technology provides an extra grip that give wearers

confidence that they can walk and work on just about any surface without slipping.

Workplace safety is at the core of why Mark's first opened its doors all those years ago and remains top of mind in the development of new industrial products. It's this commitment to keeping Canadian workers safe that made a partnership between Mark's and Threads of Life such a natural fit. Now in its fourth year as partners, Mark's helps promote Threads of Life by placing specially branded hang tags on every pair of Tarantula Anti-slip footwear. Given that many workplace injuries are caused by a slip or fall on the job, Mark's sees the partnership with Threads of Life as an effective way to promote workplace safety with its customers.

Mark's will continue to support the outstanding and very important work of Threads of Life and will also continue to build superior products that keep Canadians safe, at work and at play.

Smart
Clothes.
Everyday
Living.

Mark's

Making cents of safety

We all know safety makes sense – did you know it makes cents too? Threads of Life is launching its new “Making Cents of Safety” campaign. It’s a chance for Threads of Life members and supporters to make sense – and cents – of safety by contributing to a health and safety culture shift. Donations will support the Threads of Life vision of a world in which workplace fatalities, injuries and illnesses are unacceptable. Just set up a change jar and fill it up with loonies, toonies, and other spare change.

A few ideas:

- Put a change jar in your safety office or on the shop floor and encourage people to contribute when they see someone working safely.
- Take up a collection at your joint health and safety meeting.
- Leave a jar in the lunchroom or on the front counter at work and explain that contributions will support programs such as the Regional Family Forums, Speakers Bureau, Volunteer Family Guides and the Threads quarterly newsletter.
- Place a jar on your kitchen table and drop in a quarter when you say thanks for the meal.

Donations can be deposited to Threads of Life at any TD Bank branch.

Watch the Threads of Life web site for more information, and for labels you can use on your coin jar.

Contact John McCabe at 1-888-567-9490 if you’d like information about how you can get involved in Making Cents of Safety.

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

Coming Events

Western Canada Family Forum –
September 20-22, 2013

Central Canada Family Forum –
November 1-3, 2013

Speaker training; Volunteer Family Guide training – early 2014. Please let us know if you’re interested in getting involved!

Golf Tournament to support Threads of Life

Threads of Life family member Heather Dahmer will honour her husband Jim along with two other workers during the First Lindsay Workplace Memorial Tournament August 22.

Jim died of mesothelioma in 2011. In addition to Jim, the tournament is held in memory of Joe Lovesin and Bill Adams. Proceeds will support Threads of Life through the Steps for Life – Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy walk to be held in Lindsay in May 2014. The golf tournament will take place at the Lindsay Golf and Country Club. For more information contact Heather Dahmer at 705-324-0990 or hdahmer12@gmail.com.

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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
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