



A second family

For so many people, Threads of Life family forums have offered a kind of re-birth into a second family – a family of shared experience, acceptance and understanding for those who are trying to cope in the wake of a workplace tragedy. Of the four annual family forums, three are coming up in October and November.

Read the details on page 8.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Eleanor Westwood

None of us know what tomorrow will bring, and a workplace tragedy reinforces that uncertainty – everything changes in a moment. For those who've experienced a serious injury, the future becomes even more of a question mark. The injured worker's condition may continue

to evolve, with new developments, treatments, and possible restrictions occurring. In this issue of Threads, two of our family members talk about what it's like to experience the uncertainty of living with someone who's been injured on the job.

We don't truly know what the future holds for Threads of Life either. We continue to grow – now serving more than 2400 family members across the country. We continue to work to ensure our programs and services will be there for Canadians who need them, while at the same time looking towards a day when workplace tragedies will be eliminated and our club will have no new members. In June, I was honoured and proud to take over from Bill Stunt as chairperson of the Threads of Life board of directors. I would like to thank Bill for his contributions as our chair, and to the organization as a whole - and very pleased he will continue on as a board member. I have been involved with this organization since it formed and on the board since 2006. I have watched it mature and grow as it responds to the needs of families, while spreading the important message of prevention. I look forward to continuing to work with you and the board in this new role as we move into the future together.

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Workplace injury spurs change for couple

by Sam Unruh



Sam and Julia Unruh

Change! that is the

one word which can express what Julia and I have experienced over the past ten years.

Let's begin by going back to the Victoria Day long weekend in 2006. Julia was at work, I was at home with the kids. The phone rings and it is Julia on the line. She tells me she is at Emergency. Something happened at work and she can no longer move her right hand and arm. She wants me to come and get her as she can't drive a standard with only her left hand.

I scramble to get out the door as soon as possible, take my son and his cousin along so they can drive the second vehicle back. I get to the hospital, find Julia and see firsthand that she really can't move her arm. The doctor doesn't seem too concerned, figures she just pulled something and that it will resolve. We find out later that he didn't even record that she was unable to move her arm or fingers.

This was the beginning of a long journey through dealing with a doctor who basically brushed off what was happening, specialists and tests (painful for me

to watch, much more painful for her to endure) to "prove" that she truly was injured. Along with that came the day when it was decided that she had no visible sign of injury and so would not be covered by Worker's Compensation. That was challenged and won, but with a possible high cost as the delay in providing treatment may well have been what permitted

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Julia's condition to develop into full-blown Chronic Regional Pain Syndrome. That delay may well be what has left my wife with a condition that puts her in constant pain, a sense of burning pins and needles and numbness that has slowly spread through

“We know that others simply won't understand. You can't unless you have been there.”

her right arm, moved into her left and is now affecting her feet and legs. It is something that she lives with all day, every day. I don't know how she does it.

When I was asked whether I would write something about what it is like to live with someone who has encountered a life-altering injury I immediately had a range of thoughts run through my mind. One thought was, how do you write about an injury that people don't see? Another was, how do you explain what it is really like? The weeks since this request was put to me have actually been a good learning period as I have seen Julia's condition progress further and have had to watch her trying to deal with it, putting on a brave front for both myself and others.

As I began, CHANGE occurred in our lives ten years ago and CHANGE is happening still as we try to plan for the future without becoming discouraged as we foresee what may yet happen. I have spent the last ten years watching my wife who used to be fiercely independent become more and more reliant on others to perform what used to be casual and simple tasks for her to perform. I have watched someone who was able to work back-to-back shifts and still make a 40-minute drive home get to the point where she doesn't trust herself on more than short driving trips due to the ex-

haustion brought by pain and medications. She no longer has the freedom to travel to see family as she would like to, unless someone is able to drive her. Since I work full-time she is pretty much tied to home most of the week. We were never highly

active in outdoor activities but we liked to go for walks or window shop at the mall. For the first while after the injury we still could but slowly the CRPS began to sap her energy to where we would rarely do more than very short walks. As the condition has travelled into her legs and feet we have pretty much eliminated any of this type of activity from our lives. On days when Julia has to go in, have appointments, and do a little bit of shopping I now see her pay with days of pain in her feet. She stubbornly refused to use a scooter at the store but even the Walmart greeter finally forced her to start using it as they saw the pain she was in. Her doctor wants her to keep walking, and so does she, but I watch her afterwards and I cringe when I see her wince with every step she takes.

Julia used to be heavily involved in many hobby and craft ideas, sewing and loved to cook. When you lose the ability to use your hands and feet those things get put aside, not by choice, but of necessity. Thankfully she has managed to find some things that she can still do but nothing at the speed she used to be able to.

wondering what others think (“she isn’t working, she doesn’t look injured, why is she getting paid to sit at home?”). These



Sam built a gazebo so Julia can enjoy her flowers and garden

are all the kinds of things that run through my mind. I want to explain it to people, I want them to understand that we would never have chosen this. An injury is not something you seek out any more than most would ever deliberately drive a classic car into a post just to collect on the insurance. Some things you just don’t seek out, sometimes they come and find you.

You will notice that I have for the most part focused on Julia. Well, that is because it is her injury and she is the one who has

comparison to hers which is why I usually find it fairly easy to be there for her.

However, I would be a liar to say that there aren’t days when I get angry. Angry that this had to happen, angry about how it has affected Julia, angry about how it has changed our hopes and plans for this stage in our lives, even angry at her because she sometimes simply can’t remember to do things that needed to be done (apparently pain and medications don’t do much for memory). Sometimes I do express that anger and even at times direct it toward Julia. We both have these days, sometimes she is the one directing the anger at me (and she really DOES have things to be angry about). What we are thankful for, though, is that we have been able to come to an understanding that usually neither of us is truly angry at the other, rather we are indulging in a bit of selfishness and self-pity, expressing our frustrations to each other. We know that others simply won’t understand. You can’t unless you have been there. We have learned to talk about things, express our frustrations, and at times just cry together because we know that while life didn’t end with Julia’s injury, it most certainly has CHANGED OUR LIVES.

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Julia loves babies and was always looking forward to when we might have grandchildren. We are now expecting our first grandchild and she already knows that she won’t be able to create the many outfits that little one would have received. She will still try to sew but what used to be a simple activity for her is slow and drains her energy.

Daily responsibilities around the yard and home were things we used to share. Now Julia feels guilty because I have to do all of it. I don’t mind but she feels that she isn’t able to do her part.

Watching her walk in constant pain,

truly lost. Yes, I have lost some freedom that I might otherwise have to be more involved in hobbies that interest me; I have lost the enjoyment of simple leisure activities with my wife, and I have lost a wife who had much greater energy and drive than she does now. However, I still have a loving wife who does appreciate what I do (most of the time). My losses have been minor in



Sam and Julia on their wedding day

After the call

by Debb Perry

Learning to walk a new path together.



Debb, Kevin and Avery

I was excited about life, about my future. Kevin and I had bought a house, a beautiful two-storey that I loved. We adopted a dog. And we were planning a wedding. The wedding date had been set. We planned to have it on a small steam ship with our closest family and friends. Our lives were happy and we were content with the direction things were going. And then the phone rang...there has been an accident...get to the hospital...

After that call I was calm. I was thinking through the next steps I had to take – tell someone that I had to go to the hospital, get my things together, get into my truck and head out.

I am thankful for those around me that day who cared enough not to let me leave on my own. By the time I reached the front door I was shaking. I truly didn't know – I wasn't told – if Kev was alive or dead. The voice on the phone just said, "...get to the hospital."

I've never felt so lost, so alone. Hospitals make me nervous as it is. Being alone in one (no one was allowed in with me because of SARS) in a small room,

waiting see Kev, was terrifying. I sat there alone and shook.

Four times the door opened. First I was told I would have to sign some papers; papers giving the doctor permission to amputate Kev's feet. What? Then I was given a clear, plastic bag full of Kev's things: clothes, boots, keys, wallet; everything he had with him when they brought him to the hospital. I just sat there, staring at the bag. What? The third time the door opened I was handed a phone – someone was calling me. Who? It was Kev's sister, Leslie. Thank you – a familiar voice. How was I? Scared and alone and trying not to cry. Had I seen Kev?

No, not yet. Why? I didn't know. The final time the door

opened, I was taken to see Kev. How do you keep from falling apart while looking down on the most important person in your life when you see him so broken? "I'm sorry." That's what he said, over and over. I wanted to hold him and kiss him, but I was afraid to touch him, to hurt him. All I could say was, "It's ok," and smile, hoping I was making him feel a little better. I said, "It'll be ok." I hoped.

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By the time I reached the front door I was shaking. I truly didn't know – I wasn't told – if Kev was alive or dead.

I walked beside the bed as they wheeled it toward the doors to the operating room. I was numb. I was shaking. I didn't know what to expect the next time I saw him. And then, I was alone again.

I waited. I ate, I think. I called some people: my mom, Kev's sister. I cried. The

future we were heading toward when we left the house that morning was fading before my eyes. Now what?

When Kev came out of surgery (eight hours later), he was out of it, still coming out of the anaesthetic and full of pain medication. His legs were bandaged from toes to knees. He didn't know I was there. And there wasn't anything I could do to help him – what he needed was rest, and so did I. The doctor must have told me what had happened, what they had just done (they reattached his feet, which had been 90 per cent amputated when he became trapped in a scrap paper baling machine he was repairing) but I do not remember. It was all such a blur.

Earlier in the day, a ride home had been arranged for me. As I sat outside the hospital door, with the clear bag of Kev's things, I was barely aware of the world around me. I barely remember the trip home. When I got home, I left that bag in the front hall – it sat there for days. I went to the couch. Sleeping alone in bed was something I couldn't face. Over the next few months, I would spend a lot of time on that couch. Kev spent months in a bed in our dining room. There was no way to get him upstairs to our room. Sleeping on the couch was as close as I could get to him for a long time.

What I needed most right then was a hug. And it came the next morning, from a neighbour, as I sat waiting for the time to leave for the hospital. That hug helped me get through the next two weeks, visiting Kev every day. You might think those

visits are burned into my memory, but I've blocked most of it out. I don't relive those memories, but the feelings still haunt me, even as I write this 13 years later. There are still days I shake. And sometimes I can smell the hospital like I am right back there.

‘The new normal’ is a phrase I’ve come to dislike. New, yes; normal, no. And I don’t mean in comparison to the lives of others. Our dreams and plans don’t seem to mix well with the new ‘normal’. Where we once went out after dinner to shop or walk or choose a direction and see where it led, now there are recliners and the TV. Watching our favourite shows is fine, but when that becomes an everyday routine so Kev can rest his feet, TV becomes less interesting. In fact, some days I wish we didn’t have one.

Bandages are also a new normal. There have been only a few weeks in the past 13 years when Kev has had no bandages. And maybe it’s a little sad that what brings me happiness, lifts weight off my shoulders, is when we don’t have to deal with bandages. Will there ever be a time when there will be no more? Because every time Kev calls me to look at something new that has developed my heart sinks. It’s just one more setback.

I’ve often wondered (and occasionally searched) if a course existed that would give me a little medical knowledge so I could better care for Kev. Ever since his feet and legs would tolerate the touch I’ve been messaging them, mainly to move blood around and relieve some of the swelling that is almost constantly there. But is there more I could be doing? Is what I am doing going to hurt him? These questions are on my mind every time I touch him. I never saw myself as the nursing type, and now it’s part of the new normal.

One very important part of our lives is our son, Avery. Every day I’m thankful that Kev was only injured. If that day had turned out differently we would not have Avery in our lives.

Avery has grown up in the new normal. For him it’s just normal. He hasn’t known anything else. But for Kev and me, we see the changes it has brought. There are times when Kev cannot participate in Avery’s life as he so wishes he could. And so, in a way, I’ve become both mother and father.

When it comes to sports, Kev would like to be part of Avery’s activities, whether being involved in them (like riding a bike or being on the ice for hockey or on the field for soccer) or even as a coach or team manager. However, his limitations prevent it. Avery started hockey several years ago. Kev has had to watch from the sidelines as other dads have become team managers or assistant coaches. Kev will probably never skate again.

At the end of the hockey season a couple of years ago the coach decided to have a fun game between the kids and the parents. Most of the dads were on the ice. I felt bad that Avery didn’t have someone on the ice with him so I decided to give it a try. I can skate, to keep myself upright, but I’m not a hockey player. Those kids skated circles around me. But I could see the joy in Avery’s face having me out there...filling in in the role of dad.

wheelchair is easy to fold up and put in the back of the truck. But does it bother Kev that people will stare at him (and they do stare)? Does it bother him when he has trouble navigating through a store that hasn’t made the aisles wide enough for him to wheel through? The answer is yes, it does. It bothers both of us; it affects both of us. In fact, Kev hates those mobility aids. And so the thought of having to take these items with us where ever we go tends

“ We’re on a different path now, no more certain than the one we left behind. But, then, that’s just the way it is. No one knows what the future will bring. And that’s ok.

Something we often did was go to flea markets, boardwalks, the mall or just a walk around the block. All of these activities are shortened by Kevin’s limits on how long he can walk. I find that more and more we just don’t go anywhere so we don’t have to deal with the limitations.

Kev has had mobility aids ever since the accident. So why not just use one of them so we can stay out longer? It seems like a good idea. But I find it leads to other worries, other concerns. Like will there be somewhere to park because we will need to have a trailer on which to put the scooter. Or maybe the wheelchair – will the place we are going be wheelchair accessible (no, not everywhere is)? And how will it make Kev feel being in the wheelchair? It might be an easier option for me as the

to make us just stay home.

It’s the new normal.

But when I look hard enough I can see that the fading future is getting brighter. We’re on a different path now, no more certain than the one we left behind. But, then, that’s just the way it is. No one knows what the future will bring. And that’s ok. It’s ok because I walk that path with Kev. Yes, walk. Some days we don’t walk far, but every step counts. Kev may have needed a lot of help in those weeks and months following his accident. But his outlook on life, his attitude, through it all has helped me live each day, one step at a time.

To read more about Kevin’s story, read the Spring 2011 issue of Threads on our web site www.threadsoflife.ca



Kevin Bonnis

A calling to heal

by Donna Green

I sustained an injury in 2003 – an injury that changed my life forever.

I struggled for some time with an identity crisis because the person I had been no longer existed. This injury has changed me in ways much deeper than the physical hurt that has lingered for years after. In the middle of my struggles Threads of Life reached out to me to attend a Family Forum. I apprehensively accepted the invitation. Apprehensively, I say, because the time of year prevented me from taking my lifeline to this new changing world, my husband. Because of his seasonal self-employment, neither he or any of my family were able to attend.

So, slowly I made my trek across the province. As I entered the facility, everyone from Threads of Life was there to greet you. They were all so happy and hugging one another. I was not a “hugger”. It had been a long drive for me and had taken a toll on me physically. I needed to lie flat for a little bit, but I had less than an hour before supper. So as with most of my new life, I had to manage and plan out my time. Allowing time to recover physically had become a priority, so that was first.

I made my way to the dining area and slipped into a chair at a table at the back of the room. Maybe I wouldn't be noticed and I could just watch and listen. As I listened to a lady speak of her ‘story’ I was moved to tears. How awful! She had lost her partner; her life would never be the same. Then founder, Shirley Hickman, spoke. She had lost her son. Oh my, how do you go on, I wondered. Then came the Reflections ceremony. I wept ever so quietly as face after face was displayed. I wondered how all these people could have been so happy only hours earlier. This was terrible, how could they continue each day? I slipped into a ‘what if’ moment. What if I lost my rock of a husband? I slipped out to the washroom and wept more. I didn't understand how a person could be happy. What if I lost one of my children at work? How did these people manage to be here?

I slipped back into my seat and continued to watch and listen. I thought, I'm not like these people; I'm a fraud. My loss is not even close to what these people have experienced. My life has been changed but nothing like their loss. Ok now what? How do I say thank you and go home? I don't think I can. I'll stay for the weekend but then I'll go home. Wow, I feel like a fish out of water.

But as each workshop over the weekend played out, I felt less like a fraud. Two workshops helped me work through some of my own issues, giving me some clarity in places that hadn't had clarity for some time. By the end of the weekend, along with good bye to some very nice people, I had given ‘My Story’ to Shirley and offered to become a volunteer, if they would have me. Maybe they wouldn't see me as a fraud and through helping others I could help stop a workplace tragedy somewhere.

Now as I enter the resort where the Atlantic Family Forum is being held I feel like I'm coming home. Shortly after you arrive you are greeted warmly with hugs – yes, now I'm a hugger. The Threads of Life family is as caring as your own family. You feel

safe and protected. You know that each person's life has been touched by a work place tragedy. Everyone – life-altering injury families, occupational disease families, and fatality families – all share and heal. The compassion is overwhelming at times. I continue to participate to help others heal. After all, it's my calling.



A Father's Wish

when i was little
 when i was small
 i had a father who took care of it all
 when i was good, when i was bad
 when i was happy and when i was sad
 i remember when you held me
 and told me it's ok
 but now i'm older and
 i have started to drift away
 when i close my eyes
 i see you cry
 cause now you're hurting
 and you need my help
 but now i'm older and
 my hand's on your shoulder
 so if you need some help
 just give me a shout

by Dave Soltys

Self-care for the caregiver

by Kate Kennington

For families suddenly impacted by a life-altering injury or the diagnosis of an occupational disease, so many things change in their lives. Roles shift and new responsibilities are added. Someone must take on the role of care-giver and also perhaps nurse and even advocate. The former primary roles of parent or spouse can become secondary to the new needs of the family.

After her husband Jim was diagnosed with pleural mesothelioma, Heather Dahmer was fortunate that he recognized her need for care along with his own. Heather shared, “I was doing everything I could for him and our family and not paying any attention to my own well-being. I would put my needs behind the others – as wives and mothers; it is most often what we do. Jim told me that he could wait, as could any family issues, while I looked after myself. I would be no good to him or anyone else, if I weren’t good to myself first. I didn’t realize how important self-care was until I booked a hair appointment and heard, ‘Wow, so glad you called, haven’t seen you in months and wondered how things were going’. As Jim’s illness progressed, we had wonderful care workers who looked after Jim while I went for those hair appointments, had lunch with girlfriends and even the odd round of golf, so that I could keep some of myself for myself and replenish my reserves. I am forever grateful to him and his insight and as I have moved forward in my life without Jim, I try to remember those lessons and give back to myself so that I will have something inside to share with others.”

Over 16 years ago, Larry Mackay suffered a life-altering injury that impacted his entire young family. For his wife, Cheryl, “as a caregiver in the many different roles when Larry was injured it did not take long to notice changes in how I felt about most things as a result of becoming emotionally drained. What I found that worked, but took a while to figure out, was reminding myself that it was ok to ask for help and actually accepting it when I needed it. Also, when I focused too much on what we couldn’t control I became very stressed and not much help to anyone. When my focus shifted towards the things I could control I felt empowered, not as drained, and more supportive as a caregiver. I needed to remember to take time and care for myself, to be kind to myself.”

Powerful lessons and wise words. The importance of self-care in order to care for others cannot be overstated. Some tips to help find the balance:

- Accept help – when family or friends offer to help say yes! And if you need help ask for it.
- Meditation – there are many types to try: guided readings, prayer or yoga just to name a few.
- Personal care – book a massage, manicure or hair appointment, have a bubble bath.
- Spend time with friends – go for coffee, a walk or a movie, remember to laugh!
- Mindfulness – the ability to be in the present moment. Leave the past behind and the unknown future alone and stay



Simply going for a walk or meeting a friend for coffee are ways for the caregiver to re-charge

- in the now by paying attention to your breathing for five minutes or focusing on nature and taking in the beauty around you. Simple practices that help to leave your worries at least for a while.
 - Someone to talk to – sometimes we just need to have someone understand. Please remember that Threads of Life volunteer family guides are available to provide that listening, empathetic ear. They do understand because they have been there.
- Just like with oxygen masks in a plane, you need to look after yourself before you can help someone else. You will both appreciate the difference it will make.

CRPS Awareness needs more than just one month



At Threads of Life we work hard to create awareness: awareness for families affected by workplace tragedy that we are here to help them, and awareness for all of the importance of preventing any further workplace illnesses or injuries. November is a very important month for many of our family members as it recognizes and promotes awareness of Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS).

CRPS is devastating disease of chronic and debilitating pain. It often starts from a relatively minor injury like a sprain or strain and can also result from more serious trauma such as a crush injury, fracture, repetitive motion disorder, surgery or a stroke. One study suggests that 1 in 60 Canadians have a lifetime risk of getting CRPS. The disease is more prevalent in women and more commonly starts in the upper limbs.

Early diagnosis of CRPS is key to treatment and prognosis of this little known and little understood disease. However the symptoms are varied and often dismissed by medical professionals

because of simple lack of awareness.

Besides pain, signs and symptoms can include swelling, redness, noticeable changes in temperature, excessive sweating as well as hypersensitivity to touch and cold in the affected limb. The pain is often burning or throbbing and is significantly out of proportion to the original injury.

To get a marginal understanding of what CRPS feels like, place your hands or feet in a bucket of ice cold water for one minute (do not leave immersed any longer). It will hurt and you may not be able to last the full 60 seconds. Now imagine that the cold, burning, stinging pain never stops. Imagine that you feel that pain every day, all day.

For those who suffer from CRPS it is not obvious to others that they have a disease. They appear to look 'normal' and are often well practiced in masking their pain. People do not understand why they are not able to do things that they used to do or why they are not able to commit to events or invitations. Quite simply, someone with CRPS cannot forecast what the next day will be like, let alone next week and if their pain will be manageable. Living with constant pain is exhausting and forces you to make changes to your life to adapt. CRPS is also a disease that is unpredictable. It can spread to other areas of the body and impact bone density causing fractures to happen more easily. It is hard to know what the future will bring.

This November, please wear orange to show support for those who suffer each and every day from this devastating disease and make sure to let people know why. Together we can make change happen.

A place to grow



Photo by Tom Buchanan, Tom Buchanan Photographics

For many people, Threads of Life family forums are their first real introduction to the organization and the amazing support offered by others who have been through the experience of a work-related fatality, serious injury or occupational disease. That support can work small miracles, and is an important part of continued healing for many families through the years. While the Atlantic Family Forum took place in June, the remaining three on the annual agenda are coming up this fall. For more information or to register for one of the forums, please visit the Threads of Life web site at www.threadsoflife.ca/for-families/family-forums/ or call us at 888-567-9490.

- Western Family Forum, September 30 – October 2, Edmonton, AB
- Prairie Family Forum, October 21 – 23, 2016, Saskatoon, SK
- Central Family Forum, November 4 – 6, 2016, Barrie, ON

Mike and Laurie Durant

by Kate Kennington

I have many favourite moments at the family forums. Especially dear to my heart is watching the new families, from their arrival on Friday nervous and unsure of what to expect, through to leaving on Sunday afternoon knowing they have found a safe haven for their grief and a second family that understands without judgement. Not to mention all the hugs I get too!

On Saturday evenings we take time to honour our many volunteers. We are so fortunate to have so many dedicated and giving individuals without whom Threads of Life could not achieve all that we do creating safety awareness and providing essential support to families. When we call out all of the names of those who have been a part of making the forum weekend a success there are always a few who have a look of surprise at being included in this list. There are so many ways that people help out and it is all of these contributions together that make the weekend run smoothly. The gift of welcome that the returning families willingly provide to the first time attendees is vital in ensuring that they are able to get the most from our time together.

Truly, it is the moments of sharing that heal and bond us all together. Between staff and facilitators, we can plan the weekend's sessions and activities but it is family members' ability to be vulnerable and honest with one another that allows for the 'magic' to happen that fosters healing.

This past June at the Atlantic Family Forum, I had the pleasure of seeing a table that could not hold enough chairs and each year the circle around it has grown. This is because of one family's gift of welcoming and nurturing new families. I am so grateful that I can always ask, 'would you be willing to welcome a new family?' and know the positive answer I will receive from Mike and Laurie Durant. As I looked at their gathering and listened to the conversation and laughter I saw the many families there together, who I have asked Mike and Laurie to connect with over



the years. That Friday welcome has been an invitation to something much greater.

Mike was injured in 1988 and it wasn't until 20 years later that he attended his first family forum. Although he had no idea what to expect, Mike was grateful that he had good family support with him including his wife Laurie, and knew another family that would be there. Mike shared, "we look forward to the family forum each year and enjoy everyone we meet. You really get a connection with people and we are glad to be able to make them feel welcome."

The bond doesn't stop there either, as Mike and Laurie were invited to visit the family they welcomed this year if they're ever in Newfoundland. And I know that even if the visit doesn't happen, next year in June the conversation will pick up right where it left off.

For your compassion, understanding, caring and sincere welcome, thank you Mike and Laurie! Welcoming new families is an essential role at the family forums and I am grateful that next spring when I email you once again I already know what the answer will be.

Time by Joanne Wade with contributions from Craig MacLean

In Memory Of Brent Wade, Apr. 2, 1977 - Nov. 9, 1999

My perception of Time changed when I lost my son Brent to a workplace fatality. Life and Time itself became meaningless for the first couple of years. I began to ponder the word Time, its meaning, its importance and the effect Time has on each of us who have lost.

Life, as we know, is time-sensitive and there are no rules of fairness or equity with death.

I became intrigued by the concept of "Time". How could one word like 'time' with its multiple meanings be so many different things to so many different people? "Time" can be used as a noun, or as a verb, or as an adjective. One definition of Time states it is: "the indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present, and future regarded as a whole."

People regard time as endless, as infinite. It continues

into eternity. Even when they say "Time stood still", it has not and it cannot! Heartache, pain, or the loss of what was central to your life can create the illusion of time standing still.

Interestingly, traveling always distorts one's perception of time. We know there is such a thing as jet lag when rapidly traversing time zones. I often wonder how can it seem like yesterday when my world came crashing down around me and yet, like an eternity since Brent's death and the last time I saw him or heard his voice? It's a distortion greater than jet lag.

Like Time, tragedies are a part of life. It is vigilance and willingness to act in trying to reduce workplace fatalities that will hopefully make these tragedies a lesser part of life - a life that we all measure in "TIME".

To read Joanne's full reflection, please see the *Threads of Life* blog, www.threadsoflife.ca/blog

A new purpose for your old clunker



It served you long and well – road trips, drive-throughs, the daily commute – and now your old car has reached the end of its road. But maybe there’s one last service that cherished vehicle can provide. Through an arrangement between Threads of Life and the organization Car Heaven, you can donate your old car or van for recycling, and donate the proceeds to help families affected by workplace tragedy.

Car Heaven (www.carheaven.ca) works with Canadian auto recyclers. When a vehicle is donated, the fluids are drained, and then the car is dismantled. Parts and components are reconditioned and sold for re-use where possible. Metals, rubber and other materials are recycled or sold for scrap. The donor receives a tax receipt, and the charity receives the value of the materials from the recycler.

To be donated, a vehicle must be complete, with its original registration and keys, but it doesn’t have to be running. In most major communities, Car Heaven will arrange to have a tow truck come and haul the car away for its new incarnation.

To participate, go to the Car Heaven web site at www.carheaven.ca or call 1-877-755-6272. Don’t forget to identify Threads of Life as your charity of choice.

Making a difference on a national scale

A successful fundraising event like our Steps for Life walk is built on blocks of all different sizes – and we need every one of them! On the cornerstones are our national sponsors, companies which make a substantial annual commitment to health and safety, and to Threads of Life families. For the 2017 walk, six companies have already pledged their national support. If your company is interested in becoming a national sponsor of Steps for Life, please contact Scott McKay, Director of Partnerships and Fundraising, smckay@threadsoflife.ca.



Acklands Grainger is a Canadian company distributing industrial, safety and fastener products. www.acklandsgrainger.com



Dufferin Construction has been in business more than 100 years, completing complex infrastructure projects across the country. <http://www.dufferinconstruction.com/>



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PCL is a group of independent construction companies which started in Canada and now works as a diversified general contractor in the United States, Canada, and Australia. www.pcl.com



Stantec is a global design firm providing architectural, engineering, and environmental services, with 22,000 employees worldwide. www.stantec.com



Vale is a global mining company which is the world leader in the production of iron ore and the second largest producer of nickel.

www.vale.com/Canada

Giving through the United Way

Each fall, workplaces across the country launch fundraising campaigns to support their community through their local United Way Centraide office. Did you know that you can direct all or a portion of your United Way donation to Threads of Life’s family support programs and services? Donating through your workplace campaign, or setting up a payroll deduction to make a charitable contribution through the United Way can be a simple and effective way to support Threads of Life. To direct your United Way donation to Threads of Life, fill in your United Way donor form and indicate us by our legal name, Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support, and our Canada Revenue Agency Charitable Business Registration number No. 87524 8908 RR0001. You’ll be helping people find hope and healing after a workplace fatality, life-altering injury, or occupational disease.

“Treads of Life”

The Lakeland Regional Safety Committee, part of the Alberta Construction Safety Association, organized the first-ever “Treads for Life” motorcycle run, to raise money for families affected by workplace tragedy. Thanks for keeping the shiny side up!



One can make a difference!



“One is the loneliest number,” goes the old Harry Nilsson song. But when it comes to Steps for Life, one isn’t lonely at all – it’s just a terrific start.

One can make a huge difference to workplace health and safety, and to families living with the impact of a workplace tragedy. Everything great starts with one: one walker, one donor, one sponsor, one volunteer, one team captain. One always attracts more. How will you make a difference for your local Steps for Life walk in 2017? When you get involved with Steps for Life, you’ll never be lonely!

Make it a date!

Book it now so you won’t forget: Steps for Life 2017 takes place the first weekend of May – May 6 or 7 in most communities. Steps for Life – Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy is traditionally scheduled to coincide with North American Occupational Safety and Health week. Some local walks are held on different dates – stay tuned to the Steps for Life web site at www.stepsforlife.ca as locations and dates are confirmed.

It takes all kinds...

If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a community to raise a Steps for Life walk – a community of volunteers, that is. Our 30-plus Steps for Life events across Canada only happen because of great planning and wonderful, committed volunteers. If you’d like to get involved, there’s a role for you, no matter whether you’d rather get in on the ground floor or just spend a few hours on the day of the walk.

Before the event

You can join an organizing committee. You may be interested in:

- taking minutes of the meetings
- approaching local sponsors for gifts in-kind
- event coordination (logistics)
- distributing flyers and brochures in your local community to promote the walk
- liaising with your local councillors to help promote the walk and invite key dignitaries
- assembling information packages before the event



One can make a difference

On-site help

Lots of volunteers are needed on the day of the walk, for all kinds of tasks and roles:

- set up and tear down
- parking
- registration
- greeting walkers
- route marshaling (to direct walkers and if required, to make walkers aware of potential hazards)
- overseeing a children’s area
- barbecuing or providing food service
- photography
- counting and checking funds raised
- coordinating media
- clean up

If you’d like more information about becoming a volunteer, take the first step by contacting the regional development coordinator in your area:

- Kevin Bonnis; Atlantic Canada & Quebec
kbonniss@threadsoflife.ca
- Lorna Catrambone; Central Canada
lcattrambone@threadsoflife.ca
- Lynn Danbrook; Western Canada
ldanbrook@threadsoflife.ca

Or call 1-888-567-9490.

Coming Events

Please let us know if you'd like more information or would like to get involved!

2016 Regional Family Forums

Prairie Family Forum,
October 21 - 23, 2016,
Saskatoon, SK

Western Family Forum,
September 30 - October 2,
Edmonton, AB

Central Family Forum,
November 4 - 6, 2016, Barrie, ON

2017 Training

Volunteer Family Guide Beginner
training - January 26-31, 2017,
Barrie ON

Speaker training - February 24-27,
2017, Mississauga, ON

SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER!

Pass it along or leave it in your
lunchroom or lobby for others
to read.



The Standards Program Trustmark is
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How to reach us

Toll-free: 1-888-567-9490
Fax: 1-519-685-1104

Association for Workplace Tragedy
Family Support - Threads of Life

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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.



Yes I will, help bring hope and healing to families

Gift Payment Options

- I'd like to make monthly gifts
 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$ _____
- I'd prefer to make a one-time gift
 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$ _____
- I've enclosed a void cheque to start direct withdrawal for monthly giving
- You may also donate to Threads of Life online at www.threadsoflife.ca/donate
- Please send me updates about Threads of Life events via email at: _____

Visa MasterCard

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
account number _____ _____
expiry

NAME ON CARD _____

SIGNATURE _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

ADDRESS (for income tax receipt) _____

Threads of Life, P.O. Box 9066 • 1795 Ernest Ave • London, ON N6E 2V0 1 888 567 9490 • www.threadsoflife.ca

All donations are tax deductible. Charitable Registration Number #87524 8908 RR0001