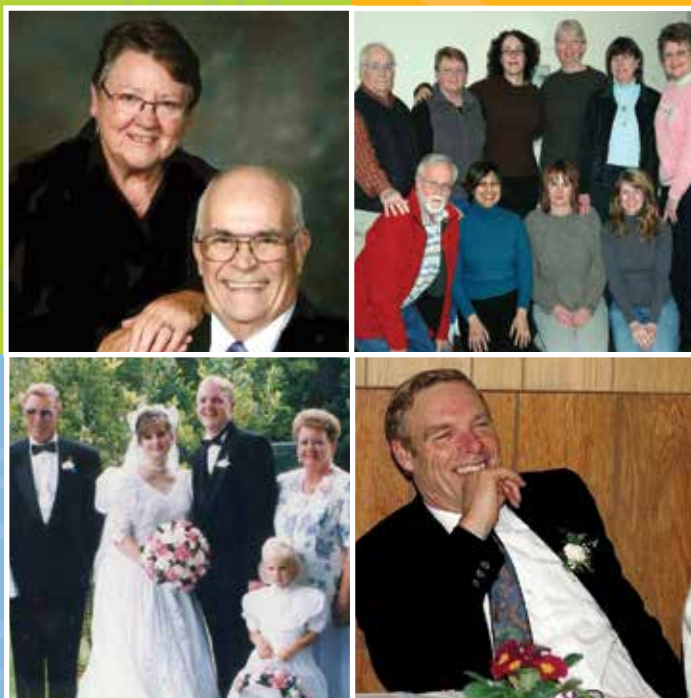


Threads of Life

Annual Report

Helping families of workplace tragedy along their journey of healing



Liz Webley's story is one of the many threads that weave together to form Threads of Life.



Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support

Chairman's message



For all of us as family members, milestones and anniversaries related to our tragedy roll past, and sometimes we don't know how to feel. There is a mixture of grief with happy memories; confusion or anger with the recognition of our own progress toward healing. In the same way, it's hard to know how to feel about the tenth anniversary of

Threads of Life. As we all say, we wish this organization didn't have to exist but we are grateful that it was there for us, and for others like us. While we may not exactly celebrate ten years for Threads of Life, we can certainly recognize and honour this milestone, and celebrate the achievements and the individuals who have made them happen.

One of our notable achievements in 2013 was our annual Steps for Life walk, which leapt past previous fundraising totals, raising more than \$595,000. Steps for Life is truly a community event, drawing together Threads of Life families, safety professionals, companies and local volunteers, all working for a shared cause.

Another accomplishment we are proud of is our accreditation under the Imagine Canada standards program. This may not mean much to people, but it is a rigorous standard for charitable organizations. Being accepted for accreditation demonstrates our integrity as an organization, and provides another level of confidence for those who fund and donate to Threads of Life.

Bill Stunt

As you read through the pages of this report, you will note our other milestones for 2013: 241 people attended family forums, and that included 23 new families. Our volunteer hours jumped to more than 8,000 hours recorded. And we trained six new Volunteer Family Guides, from four provinces.

As as you read this report, you'll follow the story of Liz Webley, one of Threads of Life's long-time members. Liz's story touches on many of the programs Threads of Life offers, so we felt it offered a good illustration of what Threads of Life does, and the impact we have.

Liz and husband Fred are among Threads of Life's tireless volunteers. Without all our volunteers, the work of our organization couldn't continue. Thank you to those who speak, organize events, support families, and serve on the Board of Directors. Your energy and commitment continue to inspire.

And finally, thank you to the organizations and individuals who support Threads of Life financially – from the co-worker or friend who gives \$10 to a walker, to the companies and partners who provide our crucial grants and sponsorships. Without you, we would not be able to provide support for families who very much need us.

In 2013, 200 new family members joined Threads of Life. While this lets us know that awareness of our organization is increasing, it also points out how far we still must travel to achieve our vision.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (as of December 31, 2013)

Bill Stunt, Chair

Production Manager, CBC Radio Network
Family Member, Ontario

Fred Fretz, Vice Chair

Former Vice President, Human Relations
McCormick Canada Co. (retired)

Dennis MacDonald, Treasurer

General Manager, GTA Service Centre
Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO)

Jackie Manuel, Secretary

CEO
Newfoundland and Labrador Construction
Safety Association

Lynda Kolly

Postmaster, Canada Post Corp.
Family Member, Manitoba

Wally Power

Retired
Family Member, Nova Scotia

Shelley Rowan

Vice-President, Prevention and Service Delivery
Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia

Jim Sandford

Foreman & Elevator Mechanic
International Union of Elevator Constructors
Family Member, Ontario

Eleanor Westwood

Communications Manager,
Canadian Center for Occupational Health
and Safety (CCOHS)

Shirley Hickman, Ex-officio Member

Executive Director
Threads of Life



Left to right - **Back:** Jim Sandford, Fred Fretz, Shelley Rowan, Dennis MacDonald;
Front: Eleanor Westwood, Lynda Kolly, Jackie Manuel, Bill Stunt;
Missing from photo: Wally Power



Healing, one family at a time

Liz Webley sometimes thinks of it as one of life's cruel jokes: like a handful of other Threads of Life members, she has the unwanted distinction of being a family member twice over. Her husband Dick VanRooyen was killed in 1998 while working as a highway construction supervisor. When Liz remarried years later to Fred Webley, Fred had just been diagnosed with asbestosis caused by years of exposure while working in construction, installing ceilings in buildings and houses.

Liz has been part of Threads of Life since its earliest days, and contributed to every program. Her life is one of the brightly-coloured threads that weave together to form this organization.

In 1998, Liz and Dick had just celebrated their 36th anniversary. Liz was retired from her career as a supervisor at a nursery school. After years of running his own construction company, Dick was a supervisor for a road construction firm, and looking forward to his own retirement working on their hobby farm and restoring antique machinery he collected. The couple had three grown children and five grandchildren. But all their plans ended abruptly on August 27, when Dick was struck by a car and killed instantly, while setting up pylons to direct traffic away from the construction lanes on Highway 401.

Two young policemen came to the house. They helped Liz contact her family – one officer would dial the numbers, make sure it was answered, and then hand the receiver to Liz to deliver the news. Liz was thrown into the chaos and grief of workplace tragedy.

"Threads of Life wasn't in existence," she says now. "There wasn't anybody around that I could speak to." Eventually, the WSIB invited her to be part of a calendar featuring stories of workplace tragedies. It was the first time she met another widow who shared her experience. "Immediately we had a connection. We knew exactly what each other had gone through." She joined Threads of Life shortly after the association was formed in 2003.

Liz poured her energies into improving safety for those who work on the highways, and supporting others through victim services. Then she met Fred Webley, who had lost his own partner to cancer. The two were married and moved to the St. Mary's area almost 12 years ago. Fred had been diagnosed with asbestosis, which has since spread to both lungs. But through other Threads of Life members, Liz and Fred learned of a clinic that specializes in respiratory disease and health with specialists who deal with this disease. Fred goes once a year for tests, and the doctor has told them he's holding his own.

The two are keen gardeners, and maintain a fish pond, where the neighbourhood kids keep track of the resident frogs. Liz is active in her church women's group and two horticultural societies. When the snow covers the yard, she digs into genealogy research – her family tree includes 8000 names, dating from the late 1500s.

What the family tree doesn't show is the family she has built with Threads of Life.

"I really feel deeply about the goals of Threads of Life," Liz says. "Something had to be done. The families that are left are so affected. To see everybody floundering or not talking about it, that hurts me."

"I am continually reminded that this is the best way to go."

Meet Elizabeth Webley, Threads of Life member since 2003



Threads of Life

Our 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.

Our 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.

Our 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.

Threads of Life marks 10 years of service



Ten years ago, a small group of volunteers got together to launch an organization that would connect and support families struggling with the devastating effects of a tragedy at work. Threads of Life was born in April 2003, and we marked our tenth anniversary from June 2013 to June 2014. (See the history of Threads of Life at www.threadsoflife.ca.)

We often say this is a club nobody wants to join, so we can't "celebrate" that Threads of Life has been around for ten years. But we do honour and recognize those who established and built the organization out of their commitment to relieve others' pain; our many volunteers who have helped Threads of Life grow, develop and serve; and the lives of those who brought us together.



Original family members meet to launch the LifeQuilt in 2003.

Sometimes the best conversations happen after the formal talking is done. A phone conversation between strangers and a long chat in a parking lot in Perth County were among many blocks that helped build the foundation of Threads of Life and cement a friendship.

At the inquest into her husband Dick's death, Liz played an active role, questioning witnesses and proposing changes that would become part of the inquest jury's recommendations. Seeing her energy and activism, the lawyer for the Ministry of Labour suggested that Liz get in touch with another woman she knew who was also living in the aftermath of a workplace tragedy: Shirley Hickman.

"I think you two should get together and do something," the Ministry lawyer said. Shirley and Liz spoke on the phone at length, but then Liz married Fred Webley, moved and lost touch. A few years later, she saw an article about the LifeQuilt and Threads of Life. She checked out what was then a one-page web site for the brand-new association.

"As I read it, I thought 'that's exactly what we need'," Liz says. She recognized Shirley's name and emailed her. Shirley invited Liz to come to an advisory group meeting for Threads of Life, and in turn Liz asked Shirley to come and speak to her victim services organization in Perth County. Those conversations helped to cement a long-term relationship, and reinforced some of the concepts central to Threads of Life, including the three streams for families affected by fatalities, life-altering injury, and occupational disease.

Liz and Fred have been active members of Threads of Life throughout its ten-year history. Liz is a Volunteer Family Guide and a member of the speakers bureau. The Webleys are fixtures at most Central Canada Family Forums, at the Steps for Life walk, and are frequently found representing the association at trade shows and conferences.

Liz's only regret, she says, is that Threads of Life has grown so large. At one time, she could name and recognize most of the members. Today, the organization that started in conversations and connections now supports 1,700+ family members coast to coast. Like all Threads of Life members, Liz is grateful that Threads of Life is there, but disheartened that the need is so great.

"You two should get together and do something"

200 New Family Members in 2013



Family Support / Volunteer Family Guides

“I knew what it was like”

“I knew what it was like to be floating in the dark without someone to stand by you,” Liz Webley says.

Despite support from family and friends, after her first husband Dick’s death, Liz felt alone and isolated in her grief. No one really understood what it meant to have a spouse killed so suddenly and traumatically in the workplace. Her intimate knowledge of that isolation and grief inspired Liz to join the very first group of Volunteer Family Guides trained by Threads of Life, in 2005. Since then, Liz has supported close to 20 others, mostly widows, in navigating the chaotic waters after a tragedy.

The Threads of Life Volunteer Family Guide (VFG) program is unique in engaging trained laypeople to provide one-on-one peer support after a workplace tragedy. Grieving families contact Threads of Life, and are paired with a VFG who mirrors their experience as a widow, parent, or sibling. The VFG is an excellent listener and lets the new family member know they are not alone.

Many of the people Liz has guided move on in their journey, and no longer stay in touch. There are a few that Liz still talks to occasionally, and a number she is delighted to meet each year at family forums.

Liz fondly remembers one mother whose husband had been killed. The woman found it difficult to make decisions on her own, and was becoming alienated from her three young adult sons. As they spoke on the phone, Liz tried to build her confidence by reinforcing the decisions that the mom was making – things like replacing the floor in her living room. Over time, as the boys were married and grandchildren began to show up, the relationships grew stronger again.

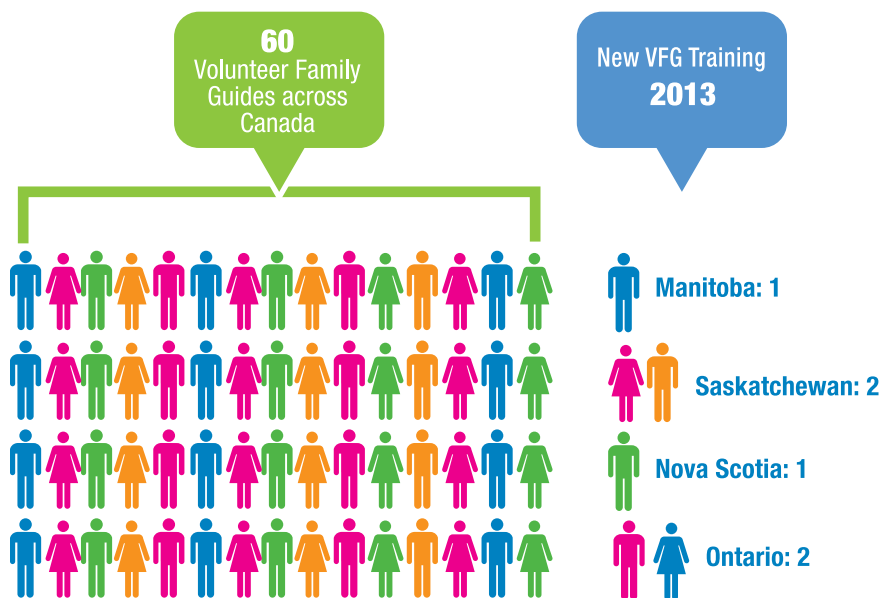
“She had six grandchildren and she did a lot of babysitting,” Liz says. “That was a big thing. I was so glad about that.”



Liz and Fred Webley were among the first group of Volunteer Family Guides trained in 2005



Six new Volunteer Family Guides trained in 2013, pictured with facilitators and support people



Family Support / Family Forums

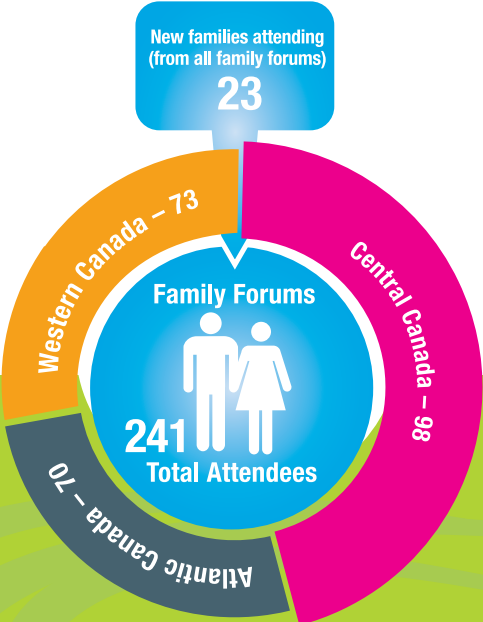


“Such a connection”

Liz and Fred have only missed two family forums in the ten-year lifespan of Threads of Life. At the very first one, “we were just kind of blown away,” she says. The experience was so emotional and there was “such a connection.”

Annual forums are an opportunity for family members to meet, share their stories and experiences, and learn healthy coping skills. Three are held each year across Canada. Topics at this year’s forums ranged from art therapy sessions, mindfulness and gratitude, to specialized groups for men, widows and siblings.

“You really have a wonderful family. You can express your feelings that you don’t lay open even to your own family.”



Speakers Bureau / Community Action



“Dick, you wouldn’t believe what I’m doing now”

Infuriated by the unsafe construction practices on Ontario highways, Liz Webley stepped into a role she might never have wished for: speaking publicly about health and safety and the death of her first husband Dick Van Rooyen. In the summer before his death on Highway 400, Dick was “scared skinny that one of his guys would

accidentally back up or step out into traffic.”

“His refrain that summer was ‘what will it take to make people slow down?’,” Liz says. After his death, Liz knew she had to do something. She spoke to the media, attended and spoke up at construction safety meetings, gained official standing to speak at the inquest into Dick’s death. And she joined the speakers bureau at Threads of Life, to share her story with the goal of improving health and safety in all industries and workplaces.

Members of the speaker bureau are all family members who volunteer their time to attend training and then speak at company safety meetings, conferences and events. They tell their story with the goal of changing the culture to eliminate future workplace tragedies.

“When I tell the story, I do it in Dick’s memory,” Liz says. Public speaking wasn’t a natural choice for her, but when she does speak “I often think ‘Dick, you wouldn’t believe what I’m doing now!’.”

Steps for Life

- **April 2004:** Industrial Accident Prevention Association holds a 5-km run/walk on Ward’s Island in Toronto
- **May 2005:** Threads of Life holds its first walk, in Toronto. Walkers represent Canada from coast to coast
- **May 4, 2008:** Walk is rebranded as Steps for Life – Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy. This event raises \$61,000 from 700 walkers and sponsors in Hamilton, Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Toronto. First on-line memory pages created by family members
- **2010:** Walk expands to 28 locations raising \$260,000
- **2011:** First national Steps for Life sponsors sign on: PCL Constructors Inc. and Vale.
- **2013:** Steps for Life – Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy raises more than \$595,000 through walks in 33 communities

Steps for Life breaks records in 2013



Steps for Life / Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy

- 33 communities
- 5000+ walkers
- \$595,000 raised
- 3 national sponsors: CannAmm, PCL, Vale
- 34 community sponsors at Champion and Leader level, plus many more at the Supporter and Advocate level



**STEPS
FOR LIFE**

**UN PAS
POUR LA VIE**

Partnerships / Charity of Choice

Government Grants

We are extremely grateful for the support of government departments and agencies – both in providing financial support and in spreading the word about Threads of Life programs and services. In 2013, we received grants from:

- Ontario Ministry of Labour
- Nova Scotia Workers Compensation Board
- Saskatchewan Workers Compensation Board
- Manitoba Family Services and Labour Department
- Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail du Québec

Creative sentencing awards in 2013:

- Newfoundland
- Nova Scotia

Partnerships

In 2013, we were pleased to expand our network of friends and supporters by signing new memorandums of understanding for financial and in-kind support:

- Workers Compensation Board of Saskatchewan
- WorkSafeNB
- Ontario Compensation Employees Union/COPE 1750
- Canadian Design and Construction News

We appreciate the in-kind support provided through our long-term relationships with:

- Canadian Society of Safety Engineering (CSSE)
- Osler, Hoskin and Harcourt LLP



Jennifer Bonin travelled to Trieste, Italy to participate in the 2013 European Marathon. Jennifer raised money to honour her boyfriend Gerry Blackburn who died in a fishing tragedy along with his father.



Each spring, Diana Devine competes in the Ottawa marathon in memory of her dad Rico Iannucci, and raises funds for Threads of Life.

Donations

Thank you to you, our generous donors. Because of you we can continue to help grieving families find support, share their stories and begin to heal. Because of you we can reach out to try to prevent further tragedies. Each donation is appreciated, whether large or small. Each dollar helps us do the work of Threads of Life

\$20,000+

Marks Work Warehouse
Triwest Capital Partners Inc.

\$15,000 - \$19,999

CannAmm Occupational Testing Services
PCL Constructors Inc
Vale Canada Ltd.

\$10,000 - \$14,000

OSG
La Cie McCormick Canada

\$2,500 - \$9,999

Bird Industrial Group Ltd
Barrie Construction Association
Distinct Technical Services
Toronto Hydro
Home Depot of Canada Ltd.
RBC Foundation
George Wellington Esquire Club

\$1,500 - \$2,499

GCS Energy
City of Airdrie
City of Edmonton
Safety Services NL
Sarnia - Petro Chemical Conference
KGHM International Ltd.
CSSE - Fort McMurray Chapter
Alberta Common Ground Alliance
Province of NS
Province of NS- Labour & Advanced Education

\$1,500 - \$2,499 cont'd

SDS - Safety Design Strategies
Workplace Health Safety & Compensation Commission
KUBOTA Metal Corporation
Hard-Co Sand & Gravel
Harris Rebar
Apache Canada Ltd
ArcelorMittal Hamilton East
BFI Canada Inc
Black & McDonald Limited - Power Generation
Brigus Gold Corporations, Black Fox Mine
Carpenters Millwrights College & Local 579
CAW - Canada
CCL Containers Inc
Claybar Contracting Inc.
Cratex Industries Ltd
CRCS Disaster Kleenup
CSSE-Hamilton Chapter
Flint Packaging Products Ltd
Goldcorp Porcupine Gold Mines
Golder Associate Ltd
Industrial Safety Trainers Inc
M. Pidherney's Trucking Ltd
Morguard Investments Limited
OPG (Timmins)
Parkland Regional Safety Committee
Pattison Sign Group
Safety Services Manitoba
Suncor Energy
Workers Compensation Board of PEI

Volunteers

2013 Volunteer Awards

- **A board member of Threads of Life** Jackie Manuel

- **A person who has donated time and expertise to Threads of Life for a minimum of two years.** Kevin Bonnis
Sharon Freeman
Maureen Shaw

- **A Partner of Threads of Life** CannAmm

- **A Friend of Threads of Life** Alberta Construction Safety Association

- **Program Advancement**
 - Family Support** Shirley Hickman
 - Partnership** WCB Saskatchewan
 - Community Action** Charles Malysh

- **Steps for Life Recognition Awards for new communities:** Saskatoon, Miramichi, North Bay



Volunteer Hours

2013 → 8,291 hrs.
2012 → 4,467 hrs.



“Many things to be thankful for”

Liz and Fred Webley and the grandkids

If you’ve attended a Threads of Life event, you’ve likely heard Executive Director Shirley Hickman speak of “lives forever changed”. Liz Webley’s life turned upside down when two young police officers knocked on her door one August morning – and it’s never been the same since.

Liz and first husband Dick Van Rooyen were teenage sweethearts – he was 18 and she was 16 when they met. They were married 36 years and four days. Now, 16 years after his death, she says her grief “has diminished to a point that I no longer burst into tears, but there are still sometimes unexpected things that bring it back.” It may be hearing a song from their teenage years, or it may be just a glance at the grandson who “looks exactly like Dick did in his twenties.”

“Sometimes he’ll catch my breath.”

When Liz and Fred chose to share their lives, they both knew there were four people in their marriage. They are able to support each other in their grief, and celebrate their own love. And they support each other as they deal with Fred’s asbestosis. Right now, Liz says, Fred is holding his own and they hope the disease will continue to be kept at bay.

They learned from another Threads of Life couple – Heather Dahmer and husband Jim, who died of mesothelioma in 2011. While Jim was living with his disease, the Dahmers took each day as it came and made time each day to appreciate the good moments.

“Humour goes so far,” Liz says. “We constantly remind ourselves of what we have to be thankful for.” They love their St. Mary’s community, thrive in their gardens and go for walks when the weather is good. And they have their families – both the flesh-and-blood one, and the Threads of Life one.

Despite all they’ve been through, Liz says, “we have many things to be thankful for.”

Summary Of Financial Statement

	2013	2012
	Totals	Totals
ASSETS		
Current Assets	\$	\$
Cash & Marketable Securities	740,140	573,083
Accounts Receivable	75,649	41,889
Grants Receivable	23,580	35,370
GST/HST Recoverable	26,438	23,919
Prepays & Deposits	18,711	9,789
	<u>884,518</u>	<u>684,050</u>
LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	49,825	38,895
Deferred Revenue	22,722	0
	<u>72,547</u>	<u>38,895</u>
FUND BALANCES		
LifeQuilt Fund	12,176	20,824
Unrestricted Operating Reserves	799,795	624,331
	<u>884,518</u>	<u>684,050</u>

**Audited financial
information available
upon request**

	2013	2013	2013	2012
	Hard Costs	Inkind	Totals	Totals
REVENUES	\$	\$	\$	\$
Grants & Awards	346,978	0	346,978	299,866
Fundraising	970,461	0	970,461	702,896
Inkind Donations	0	332,468	332,468	214,819
Interest & Miscellaneous Income	8,760	0	8,760	7,233
	<u>1,326,199</u>	<u>332,468</u>	<u>1,658,667</u>	<u>1,224,814</u>
EXPENDITURES				
Salaries & Benefits	698,317	0	698,317	613,866
Purchased Support Services	27,224	797	28,021	23,765
Events	215,721	217,754	433,475	308,409
Publications & Printing	14,391	0	14,391	43,780
Publicity & Promotions	32,980	10,055	43,035	24,775
Volunteer Training & Programs	71,896	36,336	108,232	90,634
General & Office	32,154	0	32,154	18,567
Rent - Office & Storage	1,384	41,000	42,384	40,606
Communications	18,090	0	18,090	14,903
Meeting & Travel Expenses	27,228	30	27,258	31,595
Professional Fees	10,622	26,496	37,118	8,844
Board & Liability Insurance	9,376	0	9,376	8,302
	<u>1,159,383</u>	<u>332,468</u>	<u>1,491,851</u>	<u>1,228,046</u>
EXCESS REVENUES (EXPENDITURES)	<u>166,816</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>166,816</u>	<u>(3,232)</u>

Threads of Life Staff as of December 31, 2013

Shirley Hickman, Executive Director

Susan Haldane, Program Manager – Marketing and Communication

Kate Kennington, Program Manager – Family Support

Kevin Bonnis, Regional Development Coordinator – Atlantic Canada & Quebec

Sandra Hickman, Production Coordinator

Heather Lyle, Regional Development Coordinator – Central Canada

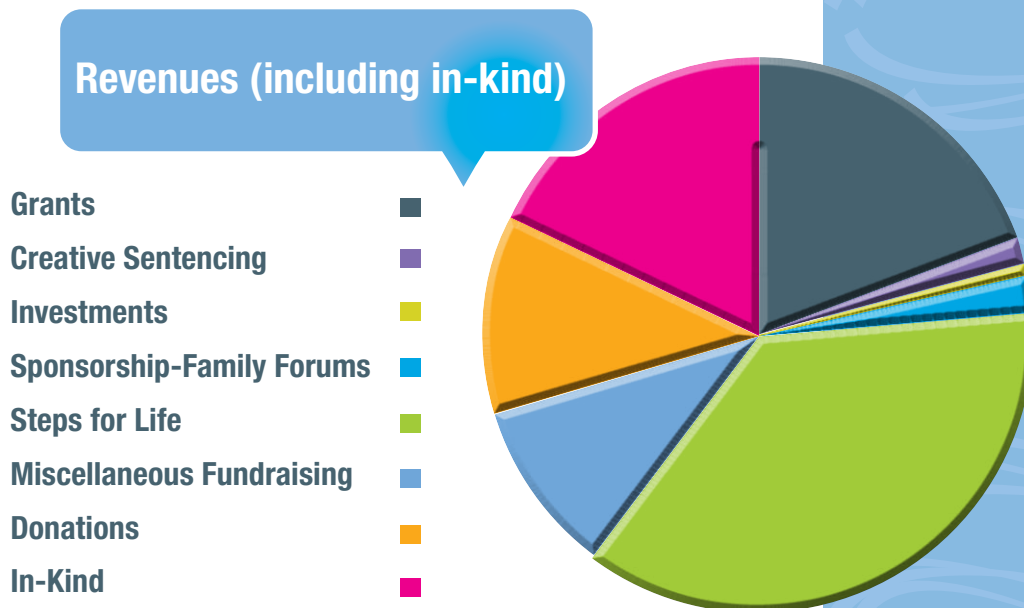
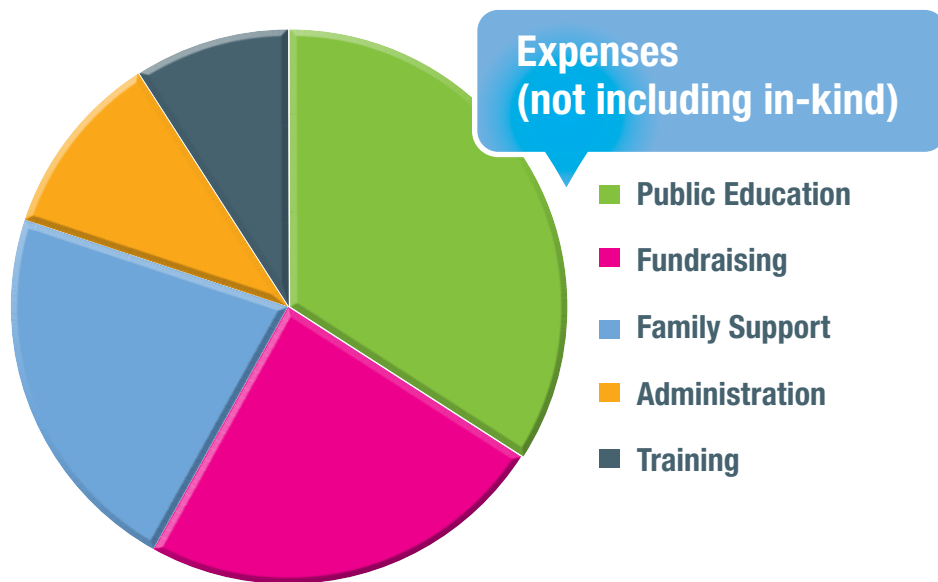
Sarah Wheelan, Communications Coordinator

Carin Whittal, Administrative Coordinator

Marissa Wolicki, Coordinator, Steps for Life, Toronto

Colleen Youngblut, Regional Development Coordinator - Western Canada

Sherrie Zajac, Event & Data Management Coordinator



Each worker and family member who has been affected by a workplace tragedy is a thread in the quilt of life. Each thread, by itself, cannot stand alone, but when woven together provides strength. Although we are individuals, we are also connected in the fabric of life.



Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support



The Standards Program Trustmark is a mark of Imagine Canada used under licence by Threads of Life.

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THREADS OF LIFE

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Threads of Life is the Charity of Choice for workplace health and safety events.