

**annual  
report**

Helping families of  
workplace tragedy  
along their journey  
of healing

Threads of Life

2015

# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

## Bill Stunt



What does “family” mean to you? For most of us, our family circle includes parents, siblings, children, aunts and uncles, cousins, grandparents, grandchildren. That circle becomes even more meaningful when a tragedy alters the family structure and relationships.

At Threads of Life, when we talk about “family members”, we’re usually thinking of those who have been directly affected by a workplace injury, illness or death (and we know no one wants to be a “member” of Threads of Life). Those numbers increased roughly ten per cent in 2015, and we are challenged to provide the very best quality of connection and service we can to each of those family members. But thankfully, our family of volunteers and supporters expands each year as well – and we do consider every one of our sponsors, donors, funders and volunteers to be part of our family. The work of Threads of

Life would be impossible without them.

In 2015 we saw a record number of new partners join that family – provincial compensation boards, safety organizations and safety-driven companies. And more of these partners are making a formal commitment to support Threads of Life for multiple years – a vital step in ensuring our organization remains sustainable.

Our staff and board of directors are important members of the family. Last year, three new staff members came to Threads of Life: Lorna Catrambone, Lynn Danbrook and Patti Penny. Karen Lapierre Pitts joined the board. And at the end of 2015, long-time board member Lynda Kolly stepped down. Thank you to each of our staff and directors for your contributions.

And thank you to each of you, our big extended Threads of Life family, for all you bring to our family life. It is tragic events that bring us together initially, but it is the love and hope we all find through Threads of Life that makes us truly a family.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS (as of December 31, 2015)

### **Bill Stunt, Chair**

Production Manager, CBC Radio Network  
Family Member, Ontario

### **Dennis MacDonald, Vice-Chair**

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

### **Jackie Manuel, Secretary**

Chief Executive Officer  
*Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Safety Association*

### **Eleanor Westwood, Treasurer**

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

### **Peter Deines**

VP Sales and Marketing  
*CannAmm Occupational Testing Services*

### **Lynda Kolly**

Postmaster, *Canada Post Corp.*  
Family Member, Manitoba

### **Karen Lapierre Pitts**

*Administrator/Outreach, Hepatitis Outreach Society of Nova Scotia*  
Family Member, Nova Scotia

### **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

### **Shirley Hickman, Ex-officio Member**

Executive Director  
*Threads of Life*

# We are family!



At Threads of Life, we often speak of our Threads of Life family members. These are the people we serve who have been directly affected by a workplace fatality, life-altering injury or occupational disease. But the Threads of Life family is broader than that. It includes our partners, our volunteers, those who walk in Steps for Life and those who hear our speakers tell their stories. Every member of our family plays a role in the work of the organization.

*Thank you for being part of our Threads of Life family*

## Who is our family?

**2,316** family members

**220+** partners

**371** volunteers

**7,300** audience members  
in 2015

*Threads of Life has given me an understanding of my tidal wave of emotions and the opportunity to observe and find the inner strength that follows tragedy. It has taught me the significance of belonging to an Extended Family, where we travel individually, yet together, on a similar journey of grief, enduring the life-altering changes that accompany the loss of our loved one. It offers a safe, nonjudgmental environment, an environment of acceptance and trust. The loss of my son Brent had weakened me; Threads of Life has strengthened me with hope and helped me to build and accept a new norm.*

- Joanne Wade

*The dictionary describes family as a group of people related by blood - a group having a common source/features - a brotherhood of persons.*

*Threads of Life is a group of people who have had common workplace tragedies and therefore have become a brotherhood of persons. That is what Threads of Life means to me - we have become a brotherhood of persons!*

-Marj Deyell

# Supporting those affected by workplace tragedy



Family Forum Donated by Tom Buchanan Photographics ©

Threads of Life exists to help people heal after the most devastating of experiences – a workplace death to a loved one, a serious injury to a family member or themselves, or a diagnosis of occupational disease. With the help of our volunteers, donors and funders, each year we are able to reach and help more.

*Our family laughs together and cries together*

*It is our safe haven, a place to cry, to share, to heal and to grow. The bonds we make are strong and unite us in our purpose. Some are new and fragile in their personal journey and others who have travelled the path*

*search them out to lend a hand and walk beside them. We reserve this time to reflect on all things lost but never forgotten. We fortify and draw strength from each other and deep bonds of friendship are forged. We all have one common goal, to have no one else join our group. To end workplace injuries and fatalities so that everyone comes home to their loved ones at the end of the day.*

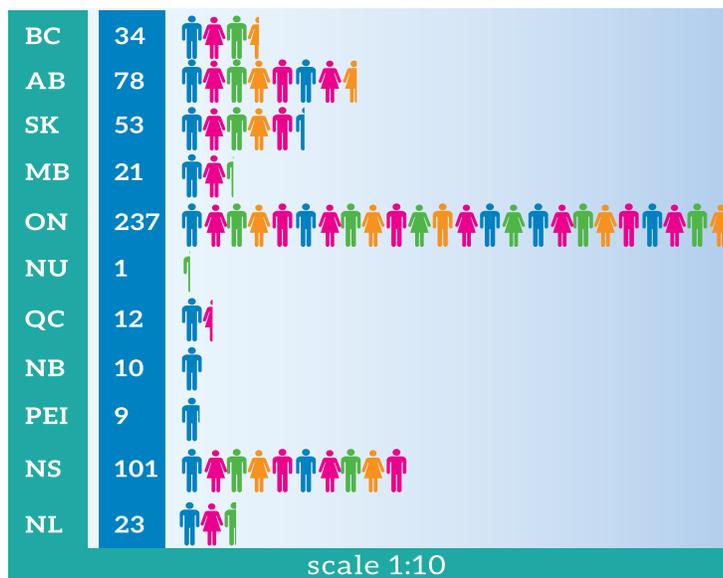
-Tami Helgeson

*The Family Forum has become a family reunion for me, presenting a chance to meet face to face with friends who were trained with me and new members who now become friends.*

-Liz Webley

## 57 new families in 2015

*Where are our families?*



## How do we help?

Many new Threads of Life families are connected to a Volunteer Family Guide (VFG). VFGs are trained volunteers who have also experienced a workplace tragedy, and can offer a listening ear. Currently, more than 60 VFGs are trained and available to support other families. Six new VFGs were trained in 2015.

Regional Family Forums are a venue for learning and connecting. In 2015, three family forums drew 178 people with experience of workplace tragedy, plus another 67 members of the broader Threads of Life family – volunteers, donors and friends. Across the country, 20 families came to their first family forum in 2015.

# Reaching out to change the future



Volunteer speaker Shelby Sandford

*Our family listens together and learns together*

At Threads of Life, our big extended family shares a vision of a world where injuries, illness and deaths on the job are no longer acceptable; no longer considered the cost of doing business. Thanks to our partners and volunteers, in 2015 that vision came ever closer to being realized.

With support from our partners and donors, Threads of Life reaches out through our quarterly newsletter Threads, through our social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), through marketing campaigns and through our speaker's bureau. We are seeing a growth in commitment to that health and safety vision, and another result of our outreach is that more families hear about Threads of Life and are able to gain the support they need.

## Our speakers bureau family

Members of our speakers bureau share their personal stories of workplace tragedy to build safer workplaces for the future.

**70** *speakers*

**82** *presentations*

**9** *provinces*

**7,300** *audience members in 2015*



*Many of us think about her story every day we come to work.*

-Attendee at a Threads of Life speaker presentation

# Walking for families of workplace tragedy



If you've been to a Steps for Life walk (and there were 35 across Canada in 2015) then you've seen our family at work. Volunteers from workplaces, schools and associations come together to make this annual event happen, both to promote health and safety, and to support families affected by workplace tragedy. The funds raised through Steps for Life help cover the costs of programs and services Threads of Life delivers.

*Through Threads of Life, I found not only new family members, but my own angel army.*

-Sherry I. Smith

*Steps for Life provides an opportunity for our community to honour*

*and show support to those that have been impacted by a workplace tragedy. Not only is it a day to reflect but it also serves as a platform to generate a greater awareness of the importance of workplace health and safety. I continue to volunteer my time for Steps for Life and co-chair the Durham Region walk because I believe everyone involved, participants and volunteers, are 'putting the right step forward' and positively impacting a change for today and for the future.*

-Kerri Stewart, Steps for Life Durham

**\$622,000**  
raised in 2015!

**Our family walks together**



# Extending the family circle

The family of Threads of Life's partners includes labour ministries and compensation boards in almost every jurisdiction in Canada, other government ministries and agencies, safety associations, and companies from major multinationals to family-owned local businesses.

Our partners provide the funds that allow Threads of Life to do its work with families affected by workplace tragedy. But they do more than that – by sharing our stories and messages with their own staff, clients and contacts, they extend our family ever wider.

One of the challenges for a charity is ensuring funding sources are sustainable from year to year, making it possible to plan programs in advance. Thanks to Threads of Life's funders and sponsors, we have seen more long-term commitments to our work.

**113%** increase in  
*multi-year partnerships*

*WorkSafeNB is very proud to continue our partnership with Threads of Life. We have seen how the organization helps provide a supportive, understanding community for workers and their families who have been profoundly impacted by workplace tragedy. We wholeheartedly embrace its message of healing, care, and prevention.*

– Shelly Dauphinee,  
VP WorkSafe  
Services,  
WorkSafe NB

*Our family cares together*



Unifor receiving 2015 partnership award

# Summary of Financial Statements

	2015	2014
<b>ASSETS</b>		
	Totals	Totals
<b>Current Assets</b>	\$	\$
Cash & Marketable Securities	981,974	936,350
Accounts Receivable	164,462	65,514
Grants Receivable	0	23,580
GST/HST Recoverable	29,549	34,974
Prepays & Deposits	5,644	13,024
	<u>1,181,629</u>	<u>1,073,442</u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts Payable	51,927	49,637
Deferred Revenue	89,750	70,500
	<u>141,677</u>	<u>120,137</u>
<b>FUND BALANCES</b>		
LifeQuilt Fund	-5383	5,855
Unrestricted Operating Reserves	1,045,335	947,450
	<u>1,181,629</u>	<u>1,073,442</u>

## Audited financial information available upon request

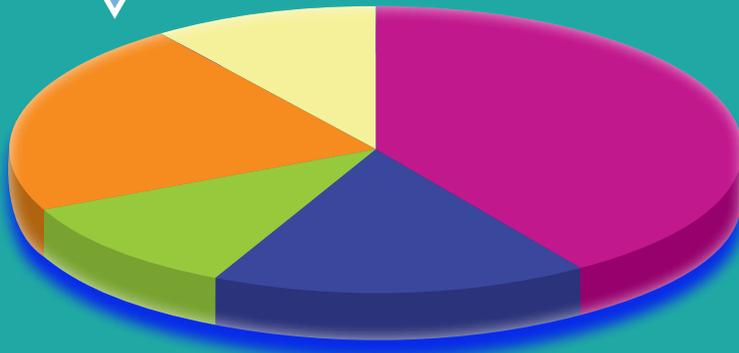
	2015	2015	2015	2014
	Hard Costs	Inkind	Totals	Totals
<b>REVENUES</b>				
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Grants & Awards	316,450	0	316,450	346,022
Fundraising	1,101,701	0	1,101,701	1,127,356
Inkind Donations	0	365,585	365,585	322,369
Interest & Miscellaneous Income	10,038	0	10,038	7,358
	<u>1,428,189</u>	<u>365,585</u>	<u>1,793,774</u>	<u>1,803,105</u>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Salaries & Benefits	853,047	0	853,047	765,548
Purchased Support Services	31,580	1,830	33,410	30,597
Events	221,911	232,008	453,919	453,539
Publications & Printing	19,987	0	19,987	16,611
Publicity & Promotions	22,595	11,607	34,202	46,452
Volunteer Training & Programs	65,852	53,736	119,588	166,196
General & Office	34,089	0	34,089	48,139
Rent - Office & Storage	19,281	44,250	63,531	57,035
Communications	19,113	0	19,113	18,529
Meeting & Travel Expenses	39,803	0	39,803	28,098
Professional Fees	8,618	22,155	30,773	21,190
Board & Liability Insurance	5,666	0	5,666	9,837
	<u>1,341,542</u>	<u>365,586</u>	<u>1,707,128</u>	<u>1,661,771</u>
EXCESS REVENUES	86,647	-1	86,646	141,334

# 2015 program spending

*Threads of Life is truly that ... Family, where hearts are hugged and tears are understood.*

-Marilyn D'Entremont

Expenses  
(not including in-kind)



- Public Outreach
- Fundraising
- Administration
- Family Support
- Volunteer Training

# 2015 income sources

Revenues (including in-kind)



- Steps for Life
- Grants
- In-Kind
- Miscellaneous Fundraising
- Donations
- Sponsorship Family Forums
- Investments

## Threads of Life Staff as of December 31, 2015

<b>Carin Whittal</b>	Administrative Coordinator
<b>Heather Lyle</b>	Manager – Steps for Life, National
<b>Kate Kennington</b>	Manager – Family Support
<b>Kelley Thompson</b>	Office and Administrative Assistant
<b>Kevin Bonnis</b>	Regional Development Coordinator – Atlantic Canada & Quebec
<b>Lorna Catrambone</b>	Regional Development Coordinator – Central Canada
<b>Lynn Danbrook</b>	Regional Development Coordinator – Western Canada
<b>Patti Penny</b>	Administrative Assistant
<b>Sandra Hickman</b>	Production Coordinator
<b>Sarah Wheelan</b>	Communications Coordinator
<b>Scott McKay</b>	Director – Fundraising & Partnerships
<b>Sharon Freeman</b>	Coordinator, Steps for Life - Toronto
<b>Sherrie Zajac</b>	Event & Data Management Coordinator
<b>Shirley Hickman</b>	Executive Director
<b>Susan Haldane</b>	Manager – Marketing & Communications

# How your gifts have helped

Threads of Life is making a difference in the lives of families affected by workplace tragedy. It is making a difference in what our country thinks about health and safety at work. Thanks to our volunteers, donors and supporters, in 2015 we were able to reach new families and to help both new and existing members through family forums, volunteer family guides

and our newsletter. People tell us these programs help them heal and feel optimism for the first time since their tragedy. In 2015, our health and safety message changed the hearts and behaviour of workers and future workers. Our family, working together, is influencing culture to make safe and healthy workplaces the only acceptable standard.

## 2015 Volunteer Awards

A board member of Threads of Life  
A Partner of Threads of Life  
A Friend of Threads of Life

Dennis MacDonald  
Vale  
Whitney Allen, Alberta Construction Safety Association  
Ellis Don

## Program Advancement

Family Support  
Partnership  
Community Action

Karen Lapierre Pitts  
Unifor  
Diana Devine  
Dave Stedman

## Steps for Life Recognition Awards for new communities

Regina SK  
Grande Prairie/Peace Region AB  
Saint John NB

*Our family gives together*



Donated by Tom Buchanan Photographics ©

*Threads of Life became our family when my husband was diagnosed with pleural mesothelioma and we didn't know of anyone else struggling with occupational disease. We were thankful to be welcomed and find such incredible support and understanding. We were honoured to become part of the speakers bureau and then later, after Jim passed away, I became a volunteer family guide. A chance to give back and hopefully help another family struggling through workplace tragedy. Threads of Life is my family.*

-Heather Dahmer

**7,972** volunteer hours  
in 2015

**20** families at family  
forums for the first time

# Join our family



Each year in Canada there are close to 1000 work-related deaths, and many thousands of serious injuries. We're working hard to eliminate the need for Threads of Life, but for now it continues to grow. In 2016 we will support those affected by workplace tragedy by adding a fourth regional family forum and establishing community peer support

groups. We will make more safety presentations than ever to school groups and young workers. We will launch campaigns to help more people understand the ripple effects of a workplace tragedy. Join our Threads of Life family as a volunteer or supporter, and help us build a network of hope, healing and change.

## How you can help:

**Donate:** Your gift will directly support Canadian families affected by workplace fatalities, life-altering injuries and occupational disease – visit [www.threadsoflife.ca/donate](http://www.threadsoflife.ca/donate).

**Designate:** Make Threads of Life your company's Charity of Choice

**Volunteer:** Help out with our annual Steps for Life walk – see [www.stepsforlife.ca](http://www.stepsforlife.ca)

**Spread the word:** Let those who need help know where to find it: [www.threadsoflife.ca](http://www.threadsoflife.ca)

*The first time I went to a Family Forum, I was worried about what I was walking into. Threads of Life paired me with a wonderful lady that made me feel very comfortable and not so alone. I made many new friends that weekend, many of which I communicate with regularly. I now look forward to Family Forums, it's like the yearly family reunion, where you get to catch up with all the "cousins" that you only get to see at the forum.*

- Lisa Shirley



*My Threads of Life family isn't just a second family to me... some have become an extension of my family. I become more grateful with*

*every Family Forum I attend that I found this organization and some of the people that have walked with me through this journey. The support and acceptance I have received, no matter what stage I've been in, has been invaluable.*

*-Johanna LeRoux*



# threads

OF LIFE

*Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support*

***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.***

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter



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[www.twitter.com/threadssoflife](http://www.twitter.com/threadssoflife)

## THREADS OF LIFE

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[www.stepsforlife.ca](http://www.stepsforlife.ca)

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



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