



Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support

For immediate release

Newfoundland & Labrador court sentences mining company to contribute \$20,000 to Threads of Life

LONDON, Ontario, 4 August 2011—Newfoundland and Labrador court has ordered Wabush Mines, a company who has plead guilty to two violations of the province’s Occupational Health and Safety Act, to contribute \$20,000 to the Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support (known as Threads of Life) as part of a ‘creative sentence’. Threads of Life is a Canadian charity that supports families affected by a workplace fatality, life-altering injury or occupational disease.

A creative sentence allows monies to be directed to charitable groups that support programs that will prevent similar experiences. There are currently only two other provinces, Alberta and Nova Scotia, which allow creative sentencing in safety violation convictions. Newfoundland and Labrador’s provincial court becomes the third to direct funds to Threads of Life in this way.

“Creative sentencing allows courts to direct fine monies from occupational health and safety convictions to an organization that is raising awareness of the need for safer workplaces,” says Shirley Hickman, Executive Director, Threads of Life. “This demonstrates to the company involved – and greater community – that it is not acceptable business practice to violate occupational health and safety law.” The Wabush Mines sentence was the result of safety violations reported from the regulator’s investigation into a June 2008 incident in which an attachment tore away from a dryer, causing the equipment and hoist to fall. The worker suffered broken bones to the ankle and foot. Wabush Mines has plead guilty to occupational health and safety violations in the past.

Threads of Life provides families with one-on-one peer support that is delivered by trained Volunteer Family Guides who have also experienced a workplace tragedy. Families are provided with links to community resources and opportunities to take action by promoting workplace injury prevention in their communities. The creative sentencing monies resulting from the July 26th decision will support the further development of the Atlantic Canada Family Forum, a regional event held annually each spring in Nova Scotia since 2008. The event is a three-day forum for east coast families impacted by a workplace tragedy, and includes family members from all four Atlantic provinces. Fundraising, sponsorships and this \$20,000 award will be used to cover the costs of the event which brings families of workplace tragedy together to share, learn healthy coping skills and other support to help them along their journey of healing. Threads of Life’s charitable organization business number is 87524 8908 RR0001.

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