

COMFORT AND CHALLENGE WITH THE HOLIDAYS

From the Chair

— By Bill Stunt —



Welcome to the winter edition of the Threads of Life newsletter. It's hard to believe that another year has almost passed. Time goes so quickly with our busy modern day schedules. The holiday season is upon us and it's our hope that you'll find time to take a break from the busy day-to-day. That said, we all know that holidays can be a challenging time for our family members. Inside this newsletter

you'll find pages devoted to reflections on how to deal with the challenges the holidays can present when you're coping with a loss, a debilitating injury or illness in your family.

Inside this edition we also have a couple of pages devoted to the mission of Threads. Our organization relies on funds that come from a number of sources. We get grants from governmental agencies. We have partners that sponsor our walk and family forums. But we also rely on donations from the public. One of the easiest ways for you to help is to join in the Steps for Life walk -- read about the new fund raising pages you can use to raise money and spread the word.

Most of our Central Canada family members will know Marj Deyell. She and her husband Brian are active members and volunteers. Marj is a former board member and a very active speaker on behalf of workplace safety. Marj is also a big reader and has organized our first Threads of Life book club. The book club will be accessible via teleconference. What a great idea! You'll find the details inside the pages of this newsletter. Just to get you interested, the first book on the club's list is Randy Pausch's *The Last Lecture*.

As always the newsletter features stories from our families. Betty and Dick Cousineau lost their eldest son Kent in a tragic fire during a training exercise. Betty details her journey from the moment of the tragedy to her hard-earned acceptance that there was no solace to be found in a guilty verdict and fine being levied on her son's employer.

A debilitating work place injury doesn't just affect the body. Donna Green makes that very clear in her story. She had always wanted to be a nurse. She fulfilled that ambition but a serious back injury put an end to her nursing career. Coping with the physical injury was difficult. Coping with the psychological impact of having to redefine herself as disabled and not a nurse was equally if not more difficult.

Please enjoy this newsletter and again the best of the holidays to you and your family.

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In memory of Kent Cousineau 1975-2008

Family raises funds and awareness to honour firefighter's memory

Betty Cousineau

December 9, 2009 5:00 PM

Sudbury, ON – The [Ontario] Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) was fined \$300,000 yesterday for a violation under the Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHS) after a worker was killed.

On May 2, 2008, firefighters employed seasonally by the ministry went to Killarney Provincial Park to burn a "slash pile" consisting of fine brush material and other debris. Workers mixed some fuels and ignited the pile. A crew leader then conducted a training exercise involving a "drip torch" used in fire suppression. When the fire started to die down, another crew leader began pouring more fuel on the pile. The fuel flared and engulfed the crew leader in flames. Two workers who tried to put out the flames suffered minor burns. The crew leader suffered severe burns and died.

A Ministry of Labour investigation found that personal protective equipment (PPE) had been issued to all the workers, but none of them were wearing full PPE at the time of the incident.

The Ministry of Natural Resources pleaded guilty to failing as an employer, to take the reasonable precaution of ensuring the use of personal protective equipment as appropriate to the task for mixing fuels, using a drip torch and burning a slash pile.

The crew leader suffering severe burns and dying was our son Kent, 33 years old. Someone was blamed, charged and obviously responsible for this tragic end to our son's life. We should have felt some sort of satisfaction. Victory! But our son was dead. No plea of "guilty" or fine of any amount would diminish the sense of loss and grief felt by Kent's family, friends and co-workers. I'd like to tell you about my dynamic son who touched the lives of those he met.

Kent was the eldest of my two wonderful sons; an older brother to Keith. Kent was energetic, confident, loved challenges and enjoyed arguments and confrontation. He could be extremely impatient, spontaneous – he went sky-diving ONCE. He loved country music and was an animated and humorous story teller. I was so fortunate that he loved to share with us stories of his day whether it was at school, work or play. He was physical and athletic, competing in hockey, soccer and competitive body building. Whatever he may have lacked in finesse was overpowered by heart and a strong



1998: Dick, Kent, Betty and Keith with dog Molson

desire to win. He lived and loved life to the fullest. His love of the outdoors was nurtured by his father Dick and his Pappa. He loved being at our family camp, fishing, deer hunting and cutting wood.

Kent's passion for the outdoors led him to a career fighting forest fires in 1998 at the age of 23. He loved every aspect of his job with the MNR – the airplane and helicopter rides, living in the wilderness for three weeks in a tent, cooking meals, the responsibility of being a crew leader. He was courageous and assertive, with no mercy for slackers, but also a patient teacher, training new crew members while creating lifetime friendships as he traveled throughout Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia, Montana and Idaho. He loved the 'life on the edge' aspect of the dangerous jobs they were assigned. As parents, we worried about his career choice, but Kent was smart and knew his

job well so it somewhat quelled our fears.

The phone call every parent dreads came on Friday, May 9th, 2008 at 5:45 pm. Kent's co-worker and best friend Chris called breathlessly to tell me about the incident and that Kent was being taken by ambulance to the hospital in Sudbury. Kent's girlfriend Jessie and I jumped into the car. While she drove to the hospital, I fought feelings of disbelief, nausea and numbness.

We arrived at the hospital before Kent and were able to speak to him briefly. He said he was cold. He was now going into shock. We were asked to leave the treatment room as he would have to

be intubated. Dick, Keith and several of Kent's co-workers arrived as the agonizing wait began. It was close to midnight when ER staff stated Kent's burns were second and third degree, covering more than 50 per cent of his body. Kent would be airlifted to the Sunnybrook Ross Tilley Burn Centre in Toronto.

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At Sunnybrook, the surgeon felt that although Kent's injuries were potentially life-threatening, his excellent health meant his chance of survival would be 80/20. We clung to this encouraging news – he would be okay.

Monday began the first of many grafts of his own and donors' skin. The doctor's smile after surgery said it all: 'textbook perfect'. On Wednesday the second series of grafting was

supposed to start but when we arrived the surgeon's expression was somber. Kent had deteriorated to a grave condition. His lungs were failing. We stood in shock and disbelief. What went wrong? How could this be happening?

The Burn Unit team tried every possible scenario to save him but to no avail. Cardiac Arrest! Code Blue! Twice, we demanded the team resuscitate him. The doctor pleaded for us to reconsider as it was stressing his heart and soul. Devastated, we finally had to accept the fact that Kent's fight was over. A priest was called and administered Last Rites. On May 14th at 3:45 p.m., five days after the fire, the young life of our son came to an end. Our life's journey without Kent had begun.

Kent's life had been intricately interwoven within the very fiber of my being for 33 years. Grief is a process that changes a relationship based on physical presence to one based on memory. It is said that that you bury your past when you bury your parents. You bury your future when you bury your child. Kent's life, his goals, dreams were buried forever. The birth of his first nephew, Kowen Kent (born two weeks after his death), his nieces Kiisa and Kloe, Jessie's graduation from Veterinary College, the marriages of his friends and the births of their children, Christmas, holidays, birthdays, anniversaries – all-too-painful reminders of his absence.

The grief of bereavement is indescribably painful, leaving the bereaved mentally and physically exhausted. Intense feelings of lack of confidence, fear, loneliness, confusion, memory loss, aching and yearning have been part of my journey. I would drive to the cemetery on a sleepless night and listen to the music he loved. My anger resulted in me writing letters to everyone I could think of. This horrible tragedy couldn't have been Kent's fault. He was smart and performed his job well. Someone else had to be responsible for his death. I wanted a coroner's inquest. I asked questions about the first responders in Killarney, the ER staff in Sudbury and the doctors at Sunnybrook. My questions remain unanswered. Worst of all, when crippled with grief, I was unable to support my husband Dick or our grieving son, Keith.

Dick felt unable to share his grief with someone who hadn't experienced the devastating loss of a child. I remembered the Ministry of Labour mentioning Threads of Life. I contacted them and we were paired with a bereaved mother from our area. We all quickly bonded while sharing stories of our late sons' lives. She was the shoulder to cry on and compassionate listener when our own family and friends seemed unable to provide us with the comfort and support we so desperately needed. We have attended several Family Forums and made many supportive new friends. Our family and friends now gather every May to participate in the annual Steps for Life walk to honour Kent's

memory and build awareness of workplace safety.

I have mentioned that we felt confident about Kent's competence, intelligence and work ethic. Initially, we felt someone else was to blame for this incident, but not so now. Why did he empty the fuel containers onto the fire? Why was he not wearing his fire retardant shirt? He has to be responsible for his bad choices. The MNR incorporated 16 procedural changes as a result of his death. Full PPE must be worn at all times and all fuel containers clearly marked. Perhaps the changes will prevent additional injuries or deaths.

Our goal is to raise awareness regarding workplace safety by sharing Kent's story. This past year we designed wristbands: "Remember Kent; Always think safety". We have distributed 1,500 to every MNR base in Ontario, all the Sudbury fire stations in addition to several Hydro One and Greater Sudbury Utilities employees. We cannot stress enough the importance of making that tough choice to speak out about unsafe practices in your workplace. We all must be the change to eliminate future workplace illnesses, injuries and deaths.

A parent's worst fear is that their dead child will be forgotten. The tributes began with Kent's funeral, attended by 1,500 Sudbury firefighters and MNR firefighters who formed an honour guard, and continued with memorials from government and firefighters' associations, including his name on the new firefighters' memorial in Ottawa: 'Never to be Forgotten.'

When arranging his funeral, we requested donations for a bursary in his memory. Each September, Jessie hosts a fundraising golf tournament. Serious golfers need not attend. As a result, we annually present a \$500 Bursary to a Lively District Secondary School graduate and donate \$1,000 to the Ross Tilley Burn Unit at Sunnybrook Hospital. We are extremely pleased this year to make our first \$1,000 donation to Health Sciences North, Sudbury Pediatrics Unit.

We first saw Garth Brooks' video in 1989 paying tribute to John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King. We included it at Kent's funeral.

The Dance

For a moment all the world was right
How could I have known you'd ever say goodbye
And now I'm glad I didn't know
The way it all would end, the way it all would go
Our lives are better left to chance. I could have missed the pain
But I'd of had to miss the dance.

Intense feelings of lack of confidence, fear, loneliness, confusion, memory loss, aching and yearning have been part of my journey. I would drive to the cemetery on a sleepless night and listen to the music he loved.



Kent as a fire ranger in Montana

Finding a new respect for life

Injured worker Donna Green copes with life after a debilitating injury

Donna Green

From the age of five, I can remember one thing; I wanted to be a nurse. This remained one constant throughout my childhood and into my teenage years. I completed high school, studied nursing and graduated. In 1987 I started working as a nurse and the more I worked, the more I loved it.



How do we, as a society measure ourselves, or our worth? We introduce ourselves and identify ourselves by what we do. What happens when we are injured at work and can't return to employment of any kind? How do we measure ourselves then? Do we introduce ourselves as being handicapped? This is one of the many struggles faced by someone that is injured at work and is unable to return to work. This is a very big part of unmentioned hurdles faced by people injured.

The psychological impact of being handicapped from a work injury can cripple you and it's not even talked about.

Just the statement, handicapped, alone is very hard.

In October 2003, I injured my back at work. This is one of the known occupational hazards in the nursing field. It was not my first injury because I was a required in my job to do some very heavy lifting. I had returned to work from two previous injuries to my back, so why couldn't I do it again? And it starts: the questions, the emotions and the denial.

Some time had passed with doctors' appointments, physiotherapy appointments, CT scans and MRI's. One doctor's appointment took one year to be scheduled yet everything else was on hold until I went to this appointment. All of these appointments and progress were being constantly reviewed by Workers' Compensation Board (WCB). I realized

that I wasn't going to return to work any time soon. I started looking for some type of support group and I found and joined the Cape Breton Injured Workers Association (CBIWA). Through the group I directly became involved with WCB.

In the time that followed, the WCB had me participate in a rehabilitation clinic. I returned home worse than when I had started the previous month. I couldn't stand up and I ended up in a wheelchair for one month. At this time I hit rock bottom. This is when I really realized the severity of my work injury. The fact that I might not be able to return to work was no longer my biggest concern; it was my psychological health. The WCB wanted me to return to this clinic because I was supposed to be able to finish this and then return to work.

During the month of recovery in the clinic it was particularly hard because I didn't know if I would be able to get back up on two legs again. I realized the effects of an injury are not just the physical limitations; it was also the psychological implications. People don't usually discuss these openly and tend to suffer in quiet. So you feel lonely.

Some concerns may be little things like: if I go out today and I'm having a good day will people see me and think I'm faking? But I also had bigger concerns: if I'm not able to return to my job, will I be able to do any job?

I strive to help as many people as I can and try to make them realize that they are not alone when suffering through some of the emotions I described in my story.

This hit me hard; I was not even 40. I worked full-time, with three children at home. My days were packed full from morning to night. Now what? So now you feel lost.

The WCB realized what I was going through and sent me to see a

psychologist. This lady was a life-saver for me. I explained to her how I felt and that in our society we define ourselves as our trade or job. I no longer had one and would not have one, so what am I? So now you feel depressed.

Everyone knows that the person you are at work is not the same person you are at home.

Where is that person? Will I ever find her again?

The very wise psychologist saw that I was struggling with this and told me that the person you were at work no longer exists and won't ever again, so treat it as a death and grieve for her. So now you are grieving for a loss.

That is great advice but very hard to do. How do you grieve for a part of you that you enjoyed and loved? How do you come to grips with the fact that you will never work again?

By this time I was back on two legs again, so the WCB sent me away to another clinic, but this time to another province for three months. I went to rehabilitation for one hour a day and spent 23 hours a day alone. I had some free time on my hands to follow the advice given to me and I began to implement some of the coping techniques shown to me. I successfully completed this clinic but was still unable to return to any work.

I was able to stand and walk with a cane, so I was considered handicapped by the medical community. This term alone took some time to deal with. One minute you are at your job working and the next you are injured and you become handicapped as a result of it. So now you feel the anger.

Now all the doors are shut, meaning there are no more options but the WCB did not agree that I could not return to work.

Due to my physical limitations I am no longer able to work. It was pointed out to me and to the WCB that being involved in an atmosphere where 'helping people' is the focus would be good for my psychological health. The WCB was told that this should be in the form of volunteering. So now I felt unreliable because I couldn't commit to anything. Who knows what a week from Friday will be like? You only know that when you wake up on that day.

So while I used to have my monthly pocket calendar filled for the month in advance, I could now only plan one day at a time.

That is one of the biggest pieces of advice I give to someone who has had an injury at work.

Life before the injury was constantly like juggling and sometimes at a fast pace, but I personally thrived on it; now I can't commit to something at the end of the week.

Another part of your life was your co-workers. Your life has stopped, well as far as work goes anyway, but their lives continue. So as you stay home and try to remember their schedules so you can call them, they're still juggling and they'll call when they can. And when they do call you really don't have much in common anymore. So now you feel more anger, loneliness and depression. So from this injury you have lost a lot so far.

I am very fortunate in that my payments from the WCB had

not been discontinued during all of this, although it was threatened a couple of times. I can't imagine the ones who lose their only source of income. They are struggling with all of these issues as well as not having enough money to pay the bills. Some lose their homes. Since they're struggling with these things, they may turn to alcohol and lose their families as well. All of this because they were injured at work.

To me this doesn't seem fair, but as I told my kids growing up, life is not fair but something has to be done to change this system.

Think about this: when I applied for the blue handicap sticker for my vehicle I originally applied for a temporary one. When it was expired and I had to return to reapply the lady behind the counter asked why I didn't just apply for that one when I originally applied. I responded with one word – denial.

Things have not changed for me as far as my physical health but I have learned to live with my limitations. I have a new found respect

for life. My days are short sometimes as I may need rest more frequently than someone my age but I have learned to accept these limitations. I strive to help as many people as I can and try to make them realize that they are not alone when suffering through some of the emotions I described in my story.

Christmas is such a joyful time for many people in the world and such a low for others. When you are used to be "the go to" person in your family and you are no longer this person, special occasions make it difficult. I can no longer spend hours in the local mall shopping for Christmas presents or for decorations. I can no longer spend a day with my family decorating our house but I have learned that I can be involved in all these things in moderation. I no longer am the person who organizes all these things but oversee the organizing. It has taken some sorrowful times in my past during the holidays but at some time you have to stop feeling sorry for yourself and learn to cooperate with your life to come.

I found out about Threads of Life through my interaction with WCB. I've been involved in one Family Forum and found it extremely helpful to be involved with others in the same situation as myself.

As for the new year, I'm looking forward to being involved in education and volunteer training to help others like me.

Everyone knows that the person you are at work is not the same person you are at home. Where is that person? Will I ever find her again?

Would you like to tell your story?

Threads of Life believes that sharing our stories of loss can help promote healing. If you're ready to tell your story of living with a workplace fatality, life-altering injury or occupational illness, please contact Susan Haldane, shaldane@threadsoflife.ca

Who is the stranger?

Shirley Hickman

As I write today, Canada is celebrating Remembrance Day. Our granddaughters are singing 'Stand on Guard for Thee' with the junior church choir. The chorus starts with 'Love one another, that stranger is your brother' and even a five year old can sing that with conviction. The words are resonating with me and my thoughts turn to Threads of Life.

As members of this organization, either family or community members, we all hope that there will be no new family members. While this goal may appear unrealistic, the volunteers in this organization care for each other with sincerity and listen when they are able. When a call is received from a new family, the Volunteer Family Guides respond and provide empathy, care and concern as they try to enable this newest 'stranger' towards a healthy journey of grief.

The members of the Speakers Bureau share their very personal and unique story to promote prevention, and beyond that to emphasize that you must care and watch out for your co-worker as you would your best friend. All of us spend many hours with

our co-workers and we want to see each one go home safely at the end of the day. Threads of Life has had several new family members in 2012 and we know that there are many workers and their family members, living with life-altering injuries, occupational diseases and traumatic fatalities across Canada who have not found Threads of Life. Please reach out to them and let them know that there is a place for them to find resources for their grief, and when and if they are able, to share their story for prevention.

Threads of Life volunteers care, listen, share of themselves, respect you and your experience, promote health and safety with passion to make a difference in the lives of others. You are only a stranger by degrees. Please consider joining us. There are many rewarding ways you can help support other family members and/or promote safe workplaces. We are just a phone call away.

Please give us a call.

Tinsel and tears: Self-care for the holiday season

Kate Kennington and Shirley Hickman

Much has been written on what people do to cope with the holidays around the calendar year. There are many holidays and each one presents its own challenge. Many times we feel we need to hide our own sadness and cover up our grief for the benefit of others.

Do we have to do that? Family members have each found a variety of ways to journey with their grief. For some of our members it will be their first holiday season, and some of the tragedies happened within days of Christmas. No matter what your religious belief, the weeks leading up to Christmas are full of cheerful reminders and festive songs of the Christmas holidays.

In October you can walk into a store and see photos of Santa Claus, long before Hallowe'en costumes or candy are sold out. The season of your grief is extended and heightened. Each year brings some new ways to cope as well as the tried and true. We learn how to cope with celebrations of other significant dates like anniversaries and birthdays and in the process we find opportunities to share our love and memories.



A few thoughts shared by others:

1. Plan where and how you will spend your time.
2. Select a candle or other symbol and place in a special place.
3. Give yourself permission to express your feelings. Tears are healing.
4. Write a letter to your loved one, expressing what you are honestly feeling. You may want to put it in a book, album or leave it at the cemetery, throw it away or burn it?
5. Play music that is comforting – close your eyes and feel the music within the centre of your being.
6. Give a donation to a charity in the name of your family member.
7. Buy a present for a child or adult who may not otherwise have a gift.

Remember what you have learned: The anticipation of coping with the holiday is often harder than the actual holiday itself.

Eva Broughton

Marissa Wolicki

“Volunteering with Threads of Life is my way of honouring Bruce’s life so that he will never be forgotten or be just another statistic.” This is a belief that Eva Broughton, volunteer for Threads of Life stands by. Eva says “Our son Bruce passed away in 2006 and his workplace death was not acceptable.” When the “brain fog” started to lift she wanted to get involved with an organization where she knew she could help others along their journey of healing.

That is when her husband found Threads of Life. Eva has been volunteering for the organization for the past five and a half years. She has been an active participant in the Speaker’s Bureau, a dedicated Volunteer Family Guide, a Niagara Steps for Life planning committee member and one of our most committed Family Forum volunteers.

Eva reinforces a powerful message each time she speaks and Threads of Life has given her the vehicle to drive home her personal message. Eva says that “knowing that prevention is out there and understanding that I can stop the pain I experienced from happening to another family empowers me and gives me strength to continue my volunteer work and speaking engagements”.

As a Volunteer Family Guide, one of the biggest highlights for her is when she “can see my family members transform”.



“I am on a journey with them,” she says. “They are in pieces when you first meet them and you get to see them put their lives back together. I am honoured to be a part of that.”

Involvement with Steps for Life has also been very important for the Broughton family. Eva has been on the Niagara Steps for Life committee for the past four years. “Just like every worker deserves to come home safely every day, no family should have to walk that journey alone” she says. “Having a family member not come home is unacceptable.” Steps for Life creates awareness about safety in the workplace. Each year thousands of people walk in honour of those workers who were killed, injured or diagnosed with an occupational disease.

This year, Eva has found a new way to support Threads of Life – she is issuing a challenge to anyone with artistic talent. “Pick up your knitting needles, crochet hooks, paint brushes etc, create a hand-made item, sell it and donate the proceeds to Threads of Life. I will be busy this winter doing the same!” She has set a personal goal and wants to inspire others to do the same.

“We get a lot from Threads of Life,” Eva says. “It gave me a safe place to vent and I was able to heal. Now, I want to give back and we all should be doing the same. Join the challenge with me!”

Today is a gift: Family Forums

Have you heard the saying “The clock is running. Make the most of today. Time waits for no man. Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift. That’s why it is called the present.”

Family Forums, an event for family members to come together to reflect on lives forever changed, to learn and share healthy coping skills, occurred in Central Canada in September and Western Canada in October. A total of 127 people attended the two forums, including a number of first-time family members.

During sessions focused on siblings, widows, men only and a range of topics, individuals shared their very personal and difficult journeys. Why do we share? Researchers have documented that the more opportunities we are given to share our unique story, the more steps we take towards finding a new

normal. What does that new normal look like? Most of us have found that we can be productive and engaged in life again and still honour and remember the life of the worker who died as a result of traumatic injuries. For family members sharing the day with a worker who is living with a serious life-altering injury or occupational disease, the life you knew before has been changed forever. Finding a new normal can be very challenging because we don’t know what to expect each day.

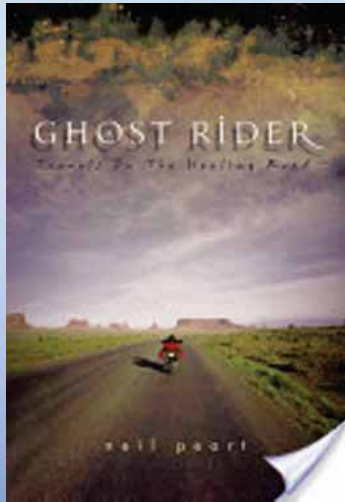
A support group can be a wonderful resource, offering compassionate understanding during difficult times. Sometimes it’s easier to try to reconstruct the pieces of our lives when we have understanding friends who can help. It’s also good for us to be able to help someone else when we’ve reached that stage. Family Forums are a great opportunity to find those friends and renew friendships.

Book Review

by Marj Deyell

Many bereavement professionals often talk about a “journey of healing” that people must undertake after suffering a loss. Neil Peart, the drummer for the successful Canadian rock band, Rush, takes to the road on his healing journey after the deaths of his 19-year-old daughter Selena and his partner Jackie within just 10 months of each other. *Ghost Rider* is part memoir, but could also be considered a travelogue.

Would simple motion help to outdistance the overwhelming sense of grief and loss Neil was feeling? As a mechanism to numb the pain Neil takes to the “Healing Road” traveling across Canada, Alaska, down the coastlines of Canada and the U.S. to Mexico and Belize, finally returning to his home in rural Quebec.



GHOST RIDER: Travels on the Healing Road by Neil Peart

Like so many of us who have suffered loss the big question “WHY?” was a constant torment for Neil. He asks “Is this punishment? A judgement? A curse?”

Interspersed throughout the book are lyrics from songs Rush has produced over the years. Many of the lyrics capture how Neil and perhaps many of us may have felt. For example:

*You can go out, you can take a ride
And when you get out on your own
You get all smoothed out inside
And it's good to be alone.*

Ghost Rider is a book that men who have suffered a loss would find helpful. It is sometimes sad, but ultimately it is a story of triumph.

Here's to our first chapter!

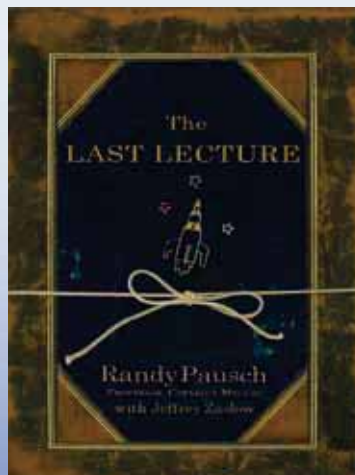
Threads of Life will be hosting a members' book club ... and you're invited! Together we will select and read a variety of books, and 'meet' by teleconference four times a year to share our thoughts, ideas and a few laughs. Following each book club teleconference, we will announce a new title and meeting date. All Threads of Life family members are welcome to participate.

To register in the members' book club, please let us know at bookclub@threadsoflife.ca. We will send all registered participants instructions on how to call into the teleconference line before the scheduled date.

February's Pick: **The Last Lecture: Lessons in Living** by Randy Pausch

“Experience is what you get when you didn't get what you wanted.”

- Randy Pausch



THE LAST LECTURE

With a few remaining months of relative health, the Carnegie Mellon computer science professor chose to share his thoughts on the importance of achieving childhood dreams. His optimism, intelligence and humour captured the hearts of millions when a video of his presentation of the same name spread on YouTube. In his book, he elaborates on the same principles of reaching for your personal dreams and goals.

Members-Only Book Club meeting teleconference:

On February 12 at 7 p.m. Eastern Standard Time the first two-hour meeting will be led by Marj Deyell, Volunteer Family Guide and member of the Speakers Bureau, and will include discussions and reflections on *The Last Lecture*. To register, please send an email to bookclub@threadsoflife.ca.

Give employees and suppliers a gift that lasts



During the holiday season, many companies look for a way to thank their employees, clients and suppliers. This year, please consider doing this through a donation to Threads of Life. The holidays are a time when we want our closest friends and family together.

What better time to support those whose families have been forever altered by workplace tragedy? What better time to help our members ensure no one else has to go through the holidays missing a child, parent or sibling? Your gift will make an immediate impact on the lives of family members.

Donate now by visiting www.threadsoflife.ca/donate.

A Round for Threads of Life

Bird Construction Charity Golf Tournament

Bird Construction selected Threads of Life as their Charity of Choice for donations raised through ticket sales for mulligans and raffle prizes at their annual golf tournament on August 24, 2012. Bird Construction is one of the top 10 general contractors in Canada. It is based on Toronto, with offices across the country. The golf tournament raised \$2,960.63. Thank you, Bird Construction!



OHCOW Golf Tournament

On September 12, 2012 the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers Inc. (OHCOW) Windsor Clinic, held its 5th annual golf tournament at Ambassador Golf Club in Windsor, Ontario. Mark Parent, Executive Director of the Windsor Clinic, presented a cheque for \$2,000 from the golf tournament to Threads of Life. We are pleased to announce that OHCOW has chosen Threads of Life to be the "Charity of

Choice" for their 2013 golf tournament next September. Thank you to OHCOW and all those that participated and gave generously to such a terrific event!

Jennifer Bonin fundraising marathon

Over the past three months, Jennifer Bonin has been busy! She will travel to Italy next May to run the 2013 European Marathon in Trieste, in honour of her fiancé Gerry Blackburn who died at sea.

The marathon date marks the 5th Anniversary of Gerry's passing. In addition to her physical training for the marathon, Jennifer has also been actively fundraising through bake sales, silent auction and lots of letters to the business community. Jennifer still needs your help to reach her goal of \$15,000 - please consider donating online.

Thank you!



Step up as a safety leader in the 2013 Corporate Challenger

Now in its second year as part of the Steps for Life walk, the Corporate Challenger is a national competition driven by leading companies that share commitment to health and safety and understand its connection to quality of life.

To enter, each five-person corporate team must pay a registration fee of \$50 and commit to raising a minimum of \$500 – that's \$100 per team member - before the event. The challenge is to raise more funds than any other team in Canada! Companies participating in the Corporate Challenger can issue challenges to other departments or work sites within their company or start off with a single team.

Last year, Edmonton Corporate Challengers, Alta-Fab, a high-end modular building manufacturer, swept first and second place with their two teams raising \$11,630! Who is up to the challenge for Steps for Life 2013? Make your mark and throw down the gauntlet!

2012 Corporate Challengers from Aecon Group



MEN'S COLUMN

GONE FISHING *by Jim Sandford*

My first thought when considering this article was “Thank You”. Thank you to Gil Shoesmith for orchestrating the first men’s group and planting the seed. Thank you to Threads of Life for giving me the opportunity to be a part of it. Mostly thank you to the men from across Canada who have had the courage to be part of a very challenging group.

I have been fortunate to share in the trials and tribulations of many brave men from coast to coast this year. Numerous discussions left me with a list of concerns surrounding the traumatic incidents we have all experienced. Questions that either can’t be answered or the answers suck.

How do I deal with the anger? When will I see justice done? What is the timeline for grief? Why can’t I cry? Why can’t I stop crying? What fine is enough? - *Please make them pay!*
Answers, Answers, Answers...!!!!????

What we know is that the answers are never enough. I look forward to more men’s meetings as we search for the ways to cope, console and support one another and figure out how to move forward together. Please share your thoughts and questions with us. Any and all comments are welcome, poems, memories – please share them with all of us.

Niagara Team steps out for Labour Day

by Sharon Freeman

Niagara’s Steps for Life team entered the Merriton Labour Day Parade. The turnout was awesome and it was a great chance to raise awareness of Threads of Life and the Steps for Life walk in the community. The team appreciated the cheers and applause when people read the banners and the shirts realizing why they were participating. The team handed out T-shirts, book-marks and brochures to attendees, and some people actually took off their shirts to put on the yellow Steps for Life shirts.



Fits to a T: Gil Shoesmith says thank you

I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks to all those who signed the Threads of Life T-shirt which Shirley Hickman circulated throughout Canada over the past several months. I appreciate beyond words the effort and love that went into such a project and each name on it touches my heart. You all need to know that you have created an endearment that I will cherish for many, many years to come. My daughter, Jennette, captured it perfectly when she said “there is nothing that he would have appreciated more than that.” Thank you all again, from the bottom of my heart. Feel free to keep in touch: gshoesmith@telus.net

-Gil Shoesmith

Welcome back, national sponsors!

Three safety-minded companies have signed on as national sponsors for Steps for Life 2013: CannAmm Occupational Testing Services, PCL Constructors and Vale.

CannAmm returns for the second year as a national sponsor. Thank you to CannAmm for their continued support of Threads of Life and Steps for Life.

A special thanks to the CannAmm employees who have participated and even helped organize Steps for Life events and other fundraisers in Fort McMurray, Edmonton and North Bay. For more information on CannAmm please visit www.cannamm.com.

As national sponsors since 2011, PCL continue to demonstrate their dedication to Steps for Life. Last year, PCL committed to support Steps for Life as a national sponsor for five years! Thank you, PCL, for your continued support. For more information on PCL, please visit www.pcl.com.

Vale has been involved in the Steps for Life walk for several years, focusing on communities where it has operations. This fall they committed to supporting the walk as a national sponsor for three years. To learn about about Vale, visit www.nickel.vale.com.

CANN//AMM
OCCUPATIONAL TESTING SERVICES When results matter.



CONSTRUCTION LEADERS



New online tools make fundraising easy

Registration starts in January for individuals, teams and the Corporate Challenger. Get your teams organized now, and visit stepsforlife.ca in the new year to register online or print a manual registration to mail or fax with your registration fee.

Start Fundraising!

Online fundraising is the fastest and easiest way to raise pledges. This year, we're making it even easier to register, personalize your fundraising page and then share your fundraising page and progress with your friends, family and business contacts.

If you register online, a generic fundraising webpage is automatically created for you. If you register by fax or mail, send us an email at steps@threadsoflife.ca and we can create a generic fundraising page for you.

Get Personal

Your friends and contacts are more likely to pledge for you if they understand why you're participating. Are you walking in honour of someone who suffered a traumatic fatality, life-altering injury or an occupational disease? Your fundraising page can be customized — you can upload

a photo, write about why you will be walking in Steps for Life and even adjust your fundraising goal. Share your own story and explain why it's important to prevent future workplace tragedies and to support those who are living with the outcome of a workplace injury, illness or death.

Be Social

Your fundraising page will come with built in links for you and others to easily share on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and anywhere else you frequent on the social web. Click and share!

Want to get on board?

Showcase your company's commitment as a health and safety leader! There are many ways to support the Steps for Life walk, geared to your budget. In addition to national sponsorships, local sponsorship packages range from \$250 to \$2,000. For information, please contact John McCabe at jmccabe@threadsoflife.ca or call 1-888-567-9490.

Need a pair of work boots? Consider Mark's.

A portion of your boot purchase will be donated to Threads of Life.



If you're looking for a pair of antislip footwear, you might want to consider checking out Mark's. This large Canadian retailer will donate a portion of proceeds from the sales of the antislip Tarantula line of work boots. Look for our logo on the boot tag.

Smart
Clothes.
Everyday
Living.

Mark's

Steps for Life Vital Stats

2012 Walk

- 4400+ walkers
- 30+ communities across Canada
- \$430,000 raised

2013 Walk

- May 5, 2013 in most communities
- New locations!
- Check online for your location and date: stepsforlife.ca

Member and volunteer Lisa Kadosa claims Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medal

Congratulations to Lisa Kadosa, a Threads of Life member from Ottawa. Lisa works in health and safety with the Public Service Commission of Canada and was nominated by co-workers for her work in health and safety as well as her volunteer work with Threads of Life and the Steps for Life walk.

Lisa is a member of the Speakers Bureau and a dedicated supporter of the Ottawa walk. Thanks, Lisa!

Dennis MacDonald receives a Larry Chester Excellence in Leadership Award



Dennis MacDonald, Treasurer, Board of Directors for Threads of Life (pictured with Threads of Life Executive Director Shirley Hickman), received the Larry Chester Excellence in Leadership Award. This award was established in 2009 by Larry Chester, a visionary and generous instructor with the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies. The award recognizes and rewards emerging leaders registered in the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies Certificate in Strategic Leadership program.

A leader is defined as “someone who makes change happen.” The award was created to recognize the exceptional application of learning from the Strategic Leadership program and to recognize excellence in leadership.

Dennis asked Threads of Life to submit a letter supporting his candidacy and we were happy to comply. The Board has benefited from Dennis’s course as he brings forward best practices and high standards. Our congratulations to Dennis!

2012 Upcoming Events

Volunteer Family Guide Training:

January 17-22, 2013

Please inquire if you are interested in taking training.

Speaker Bureau Training:

February 7-10, 2013

Please inquire if you are interested in taking the training

Steps for Life – Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy:

Sunday May 5*, 2013

*in most communities

Jennifer Bonin’s 2013 42K Fundraising Marathon in Italy May 2013

Contributions

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

Si vous préférez recevoir cette information en français, s’il vous plaît, contactez-nous.

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Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support

Threads of Life is a registered charity dedicated to supporting families along their journey of healing who have suffered from a workplace fatality, life-altering illness or occupational disease. Threads of Life is the Charity of Choice for many workplace health and safety events. Charitable organization business #87524 8908 RR0001.

MISSION

Our mission is to help families heal through a community of support and to promote the elimination of life-altering workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths.

VISION

Threads of Life will lead and inspire a culture shift, as a result of which work-related injuries, illnesses and deaths are morally, socially and economically unacceptable

VALUES

We believe that:

Caring: Caring helps and heals.

Listening: Listening can ease pain and suffering.

Sharing: Sharing our personal losses will lead to healing and preventing future devastating work-related losses.

Respect: Personal experiences of loss and grief need to be honoured and respected.

Health: Health and safety begins in our heads, hearts and hands, in everyday actions.

Passion: Passionate individuals can change the world.

HOW TO REACH US

Toll-free: 1-888-567-9490

Fax: 1-519-685-1104

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