

threads

O F L I F E

VOL.12, NO.1 SPRING 2014

P R E V E N T I O N | S U P P O R T | P A R T N E R S H I P

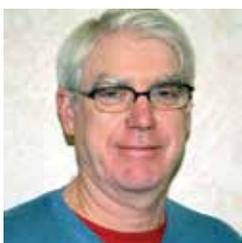


Clymont Alberta hockey fundraiser

Two of the young participants at Hockey Day in Clymont Alberta take a break from skating. The day-long event took place at the Josh Malysh Rink of Dreams, built in memory of Josh who died while working on a construction site in 2010. Hockey Day included visits from NHL stars, a live auction, family skate, “hot stove” panel discussion hosted by former Edmonton Oiler Jason Strudwick, and a game between NHL alumni and “Josh’s Crew”. ATB Financial sponsored and helped to organize the day.

To see the results of the fundraiser, turn to page 11.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR *Bill Stunt*



Spring is upon us!

It’s been a long winter for many of us. I for one am very pleased to see the days lengthening and feel the air warming. The birds chattering outside the window in the morning are a welcome sound...even on the weekend!

Spring also is the season for Steps for Life. The Threads of Life community of families, workers and volunteers are gearing up for our annual walk. Steps for Life requires a massive joint effort. Many of you have been involved with your local community’s preparations. Some of you have organized fundraising teams to participate and raise funds. We appreciate your efforts and your spirit very much. Look inside the pages of this newsletter for more information on how to register and participate in this year’s walk.

Fred Fretz came to our organization, not as a family member, but as a person seeking a place he could extend the benefit of his considerable knowledge to a worthy cause. Fred joined us as a member of the Board of Directors at the early stage of Thread of Life’s existence. His background in human resources has been an enormous asset as we’ve grown and matured. We have a profile of Fred in this issue.

And as always we have stories from our family members whose lives have been forever changed due to a work-related life-altering injury, illness or fatality. In this edition you’ll hear from a mother and a father, both of whom lost a beloved son to a workplace fatality.

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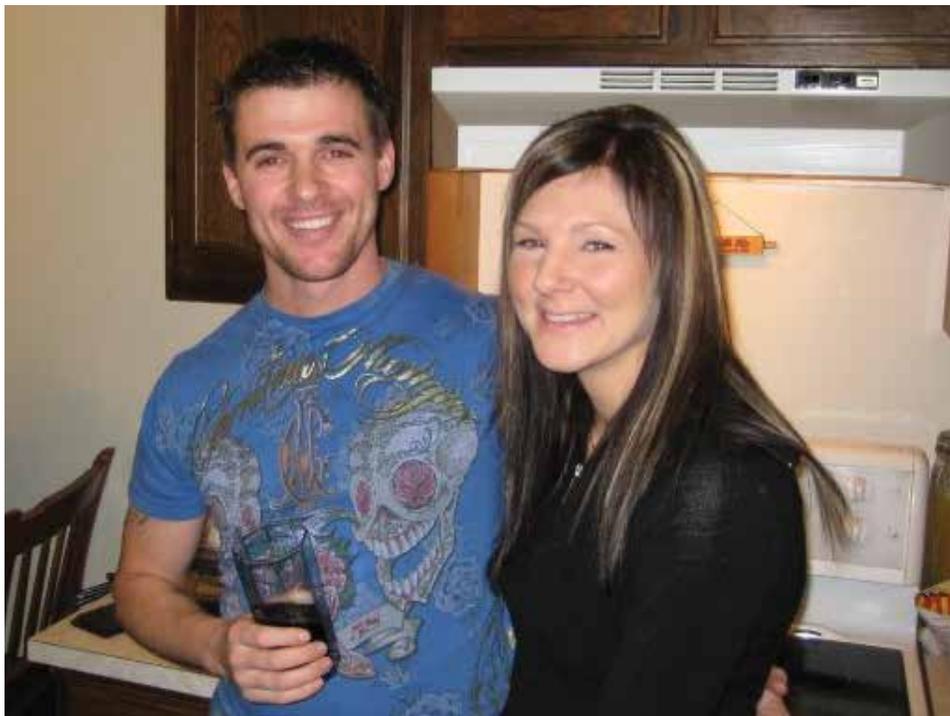
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Young Newfoundlander found his calling in iron work

Family looks for answers after steel beam knocks crane to the ground

by Marg Thorne



Kane Thorne, with fiancée Jolene, was known for his smile and loving personality

Kane Avery David Thorne

came into this world on May 27, 1983. He weighed 7lb. 4oz. It was three days before our wedding anniversary. What a wonderful anniversary gift! And a wonderful gift he was to my husband Rick, myself and his big sister Tiffany, who was eighteen months old. We had them close together so they would grow up together. They were friends growing up and became even closer as they grew older. Our family was complete, a gentleman's family as the old Newfoundlanders would say.

Kane was a quiet and very lovable baby boy; the ideal baby for any mom. He was so pleasant and easy to take care of. With a little girl who was just a baby herself, Kane's mild personality made it easy to take care of the two of them with little effort. He wasn't a needy child and didn't need a lot of toys to make him happy.

We live in the very small community of Thornlea, Newfoundland. As a child, Kane spent a lot of his time on the beach near our house. He loved the water. He loved wading in it with his little Newfie rubber boots on. Most of the time it didn't matter if he had his rubber boots on or not because he

always came back with his feet wet anyway. So many times I changed his clothes in the course of a day when he came with his clothes wet from the salt water.

Right from the beginning, Kane had a wonderful personality. People were drawn to his loving personality from childhood to manhood. He always made people feel at ease and he was genuine and caring. He had so many friends growing up. There were always friends of his at our house, one coming in and another going out. I always jokingly called it a half-way house.

When he began doing iron work, it seemed that it was his calling. He always enjoyed his work and talked about it a lot when he called. "A man's job" he would say and he was so proud when he said it. He didn't tell me how dangerous it could be.

Kane and his sister got along very well when they were kids. Don't get me wrong, they did have their little spats, but they became the best of friends as adults.

Kane was blessed with intelligence all through school. Sometimes of course, he didn't take advantage of it. At

parent-teacher meetings I always heard the same story from his teachers. "Kane could be a straight A student if he would apply himself a little more". But at that time Kane was just happy to pass his grades. He didn't have to study very much to get good marks and that was fine with him. His teachers said that they were drawn to his wonderful personality and likeability, as were most people.

Kane graduated from Crescent Collegiate High School in June, 2001. He graduated with his friends who were his classmates since kindergarten.

He applied to Academy Canada Trades and Technology in St. John's for a trade in pipefitting in 2001. He was so happy when he got his acceptance letter. He and his cousin Colin, who was like a brother to Kane, moved to St. John's, got an apartment and moved in. He did his trade and finished with great marks. He was ready for the workforce and couldn't wait to get a job. Jobs were hard to come by in Newfoundland at that time so he talked about moving to Alberta. When his uncle Jerry came home in August of 2002, Kane asked if he could go back to Alberta with him. Jerry took Kane under his wing and took him back with him. On September 2, 2002 Kane left Newfoundland and never looked back. He came home every year for vacation, but made a life for himself in Alberta. He was so very happy. His dad and I were not feeling as happy but we knew that was what Kane wanted. His sister Tiffany was up there already and had been there for a while. They would be together and take care of one another. It was

difficult when Tiffany first left but we still had Kane with us, but now both of our children were gone and we realized we were empty nesters. They were living so very far away, but we knew they had done the right thing for themselves to have a good life.

Kane worked at a number of different

jobs to get himself established in a new province, his first time leaving home. He was eighteen. When he began doing iron work, it seemed that it was his calling. He always enjoyed his work and talked about it a lot when he called. "A man's job" he would say and he was so proud when he said it. He didn't tell me how dangerous it could be. He worked on many jobs in many locations and always said he really enjoyed it.

Kane and I were very close. His sister, Tiffany was daddy's girl and Kane was my boy. I love them both equally but I always teased Kane about being a momma's boy. "Go on Mudder you're burnt by" he would say and we would laugh. He had a lot of expressions like that. He was proud to be a Newfoundlander.

Kane had a lot of friends in Alberta, many with whom he went to school and more he met on worksites. He wasn't shy about talking to anyone. He went to work on a site in Fort McMurray and met a beautiful girl named Jolene, with whom he fell in love and who later became his fiancé. They made a life together in Edmonton. They bought a new house and he was so very proud of his accomplishments. On July 4, 2009 they had a little baby boy with puppy dog eyes just like his daddy. I always teased Kane about his sad puppy dog eyes. His eyes were very distinct-looking. They called the beautiful baby Lincoln. He was born on my birthday. What a birthday gift! They travelled together to Jamaica, Mexico, Montreal etc. He loved it all and they had it all. He lived life to the fullest. We were very proud of him because we always knew he would do well. He had the drive and work ethic to succeed in anything he did. Quite often he would call for our advice on different things. We always looked forward to his phone calls. It is one of the biggest things I miss now.

If anyone had told me two and a half years ago that our life would be what it is today, I would have told them they were crazy. It can happen in the blink of an eye. On October 18, 2011 our world came crashing down in what seems like a split second. Our daughter, Tiffany and my sister Stella came over to our house. Tiffany had moved back to Newfoundland and was living over the road from us here in Thornlea. Both of them were crying. I was so confused and

asked what was wrong. They told us "Kane is gone". I didn't understand what they were talking about and neither did Rick. I don't remember much after that. I learned later that one of Kane and Tiffany's friends who worked with Kane had called Tiffany. He thought that Tiffany already knew

We have been through the worst nightmare any family can go through. Only people in our shoes can know how heartbreaking it is and there are so many like us..

about the accident but she didn't. She was in such shock.

We just learned that we had lost our son and Tiffany had lost her only sibling. There are no words to describe how we felt. Sometime after that Jolene called us from her work. She was distraught and shocked. Her world had just been turned

in a construction crane that was 40 or 50 feet in the air. They were putting beams in place for a warehouse. A beam came down hitting his basket and toppling it over to the ground. He was gone instantly. That was the only blessing, if you can call that a blessing: he didn't suffer.

It's been more than two years now and we still haven't gotten the whole story about what happened and maybe never will. There are so many questions and very few answers. Did someone make a mistake? Did they cover it up? Does someone know something and not say? Who knows? We are left asking more questions and getting nowhere.

We have been through the worst nightmare any family can go through. Only people in our shoes can know how heartbreaking it is and there are so many like us. It has been a slow, painful road we are travelling. Things will never be the same. A huge part of our family is missing and a very huge part of our hearts is gone, never to be made whole again.

Kane will always be in our hearts and never out of our minds. It has been very difficult for me to write this story but I know there are so many more just like ours. If it helps just one family to know that you are not alone in your grief then I know Kane would want me to do this.

So much has happened in the last two years. Our daughter Tiffany met a wonderful man with a personality much like Kane's. His name is Jeremy Lake, an ironworker, who is now her fiancé.

On May 30, 2012 we were blessed with a beautiful new granddaughter, Gemma Kane Avery. A daughter for Tiffany, Gemma was born on our wedding anniversary. What a gift she is!

We are in constant contact with Jolene and Lincoln. They are our family and always will be. We love them so very much. They visit Newfoundland and I

am going up to Alberta this summer to visit them. Lincoln reminds us so much of his daddy. I am so proud of Jolene and Lincoln who remain part of our lives, just the way Kane would have wanted. Kane has left a huge legacy through family and friends. He will never be forgotten by any of us. He is our son and always will be. We love you so much Kane. You are our angel and we know you are watching over us.



Kane with his son Lincoln

upside down also. She was so far away and we could not console her, nor she us.

I only remember bits and pieces of the next days. We flew to Alberta to be with Jolene and Lincoln. Rick, myself, Tiffany and my sister Ethel went together. Ethel offered to come along to support us. It was so much appreciated because we needed all the support we could get.

From what we understand, Kane was

Remember it can happen to you

Injured worker loses son to workplace tragedy

by Bob Quarrell



Tyler's whole life was just starting to take shape

I am sure at some point you have seen someone acting like he thinks it'll never happen to him! Well, that's only true in relation to winning the lottery – not when it comes to life, especially life's many tragedies. AND contrary to popular belief it not only can happen to you, I'm here to tell you that it can happen more than once! Workplace tragedy usually occurs in mere seconds but the effects last a lifetime. In mere seconds an exciting life with plenty of hope and promise for the future turns into –What now? The “what now” amounts to a lifetime of pain and a future lost.

The Reader's Digest version of my half of the story really begins while I was working as a heavy equipment mechanic underground in the mines in Elliot Lake, a mining community in Northern Ontario. In September of 1987 the brakes on the cage (elevator) I was riding in to go down into the mine failed and we fell an equivalent of 170 feet. We got bounced up and down like a yo-yo on a spring three times. As a result I suffered three fractured vertebrae in my lower spine. Our family went through many struggles while I had my surgeries and eventual retraining. Living on WCB benefits is more than just not having to go to work. It is also no more playing hockey, baseball, curling, fishing, walking, running etc. Oh yeah, and forget about picking your kids up and holding them in your arms or carrying them to bed or holding them when

they get hurt, cause that ain't going to happen. Who is going to teach your children how to play sports, or fix cars or fish or ride a bike or cook or take care of themselves? The list of things that get taken away from you because of a workplace tragedy goes on and on and on.

My son Tyler grew up only knowing me as an injured man. He became so used to doing things for me I think it became second nature for him. Needless to say he got plenty of speeches and lectures on always working safely; especially with his oldest sister working for the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB – Workers' Comp. in my day). Now, fast forward 26 years to my now 6'8", 280 pound son Tyler.

Tyler's Story

Tyler was the son everyone wanted, for the most part anyway. He had a smile that never ended and he never caused us any real problems. The cops never brought him home and we never ended up on Jerry Springer. Not to say he was perfect or a goody two shoes – he certainly caused us a bit of grief and concern from time to time. Like I said, he had the greatest and quickest smile in the world. It was his passport through life. I was constantly giving him crap that “You can't get through life on your smile!” Well, he definitely proved me wrong. Tyler was a softie, a mother's boy you might say, and he never wanted to hurt anyone. While playing center on his high school football team the coach was always yelling at him to hit the guy, hit harder, make him stay down or get him out of the way. So I talked to him about football and his job to knock the guy down to keep him out of the play. Tyler said “Well he never did anything to me!” That was his philosophy you might say – you haven't hurt me so I can't hurt you.

understatement. His teachers always said he was such a joy to have in class, what a wonderful boy, what a charmer, just cruising through life on his smile and quick wit. But he did. Everyone loved him. Kind of a slacker at work – did his job but not much more. And then about the time he met his future bride he changed. Oh he still had the ready smile, quick wit and would willingly give you the shirt off his back. But he was now a responsible, hard-working loyal employee. He was now the employee everyone wanted working for them. He went in early, stayed late and worked hard while he was there and he was still the fun guy to be around.

In July of 2012 Tyler started a new job building and installing granite counter tops. He loved this job and was so proud of the work he was doing. He was eager to learn, to do a good job, to make his boss and co-workers proud of him, to be accepted as one of the guys and to be seen as a good employee and worker. He would often call to tell me about his pay cheque – so proud that he was taking care of and providing for his family on his own. His whole life was just starting to take shape. He had just married the perfect girl, had an awesome stepson, Jake, and his first child was on its way. I had just been given a boat by my aunt and this was going to be our project: rebuild the boat and launch by summer of 2014. Tyler, Jake and I worked on that boat every time they came to camp. Isn't life just the honeymoon you always thought it would be? So how did such a great and promising life turn into such a tragic event? On September 20, 2012 we got a call from Tabitha, Tyler's wife. She said Ty had been hurt at work and we had to get to the hospital. How do you drive to the hospital with the thought that your baby has been hurt? I still don't know, but we did. At the emergency department we

He was now the employee everyone wanted working for them. He went in early, stayed late and worked hard while he was there and he was still the fun guy to be around.

He was quick witted and funny as hell. To say he was well liked is an

were told he had been crushed by a slab of granite and he was in surgery but it did not

look good. Later that night we were told that he was gone! Our beautiful baby boy – with so much promise, so much to live for, just married 2 ½ months ago, his wife pregnant with his first child – was dead!

How could this happen? How could a boy who grew up knowing the dangers and constantly being told to do things safely get killed in a workplace tragedy? I had to know. So I asked his co-workers.

Tyler and a fellow worker were to go to the back shop area to retrieve an 800-pound slab of granite to polish. For some reason the other guy didn't go with him. The granite slabs are stored on edge leaning against the next one. We believe he tried to pull the slab up off the next one high enough so he could put a block of wood between them to facilitate picking it up with the crane. Tyler was very strong and he could have pulled hard enough on the slab so that it teetered past center and he couldn't hold it back. He was pinched standing up between the edge of the slab and the wall. The weight crushed him so he couldn't breathe. There he was, all alone, pinned against the wall unable to breathe, left there alone until he died. A senseless unnecessary tragedy that could have been prevented if had he not been left alone to do such a dangerous task.

How many times has this happened and yet employees are still sent to do jobs alone? How many of our children, husbands, brothers, fathers, mothers, sisters etc. do we have to lose before one of the most basic of safe working practices is enforced strongly enough that employers will never allow it to happen? My son suffered no damage to his body or internal organs, he just couldn't breathe. Had he not been alone he would still be here today.

I am so very proud of my son, the job he was doing and the man he had become. This summer, 2014, we were to launch that boat. I still don't know if I will be able to. I have his old motorcycle he was going to rebuild which I might do some day. On March 10, 2013, just three days before Tyler's 26th birthday, his son was born: Ryder Keith Quarrell with his quick smile, who is always happy to see you. Sound familiar? He is a wonderful boy who we see often. I can't tell you what a joy it is to hold this little monster but I can't help thinking about how great a dad Tyler would have been, how proud he would be of his son, what a great influence he would be to Ryder. I guess we will never know!

Now that the shock has worn off I

am hurt and angry that my son is no longer here. Is it because workplace practice doesn't match workplace policy? Would

or seen the signs "Safety First". Let this become the motto you live by! Don't ever let money, peer or supervisor pressure or pro-

How could this happen? How could a boy who grew up knowing the dangers and constantly being told to do things safely get killed in a workplace tragedy? I had to know.

our son still be here if "never work alone" meant as much on the workplace floor as it does on paper? Our son is no longer with

duction schedules force you to work in an unsafe area or manner. Remember it can happen to you!



Bob Quarrell with grandsons Jake and Ryder

us and the reason for that is unacceptable and unnecessary.

Threads of Life was there with us through this tragedy, though. As hard as it is to believe they actually made it easier to get through and I will be forever in their debt. Now a year and bit later we have Ryder and Jake and Tabitha in our lives but the reason they are here, Tyler, isn't here with them.

I am sure we have all heard the saying

Would you like to tell your story?

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

How to tell when you are listening

Listening is such a simple act. It requires us to be present, and that takes practice, but we don't have to do anything else. We don't have to advise, or coach, or sound wise. We just have to be willing to sit there and listen.

- Margaret J. Wheatley

If you are grieving the loss of a loved one or a dramatic life change due to injury or disease, chances are others around you are grieving too. Knowing how to listen makes you better able to support others. Listening is a vital skill for Threads of Life's Volunteer Family Guides – but others can learn it too. Following are some clues to good listening, from the Resource Manual for Volunteer Family Guides.

You are listening to me when you:

- Come quietly into my private world and let me be me
- Really try to understand me when I do not make much sense
- Grasp my point of view even when it goes against your sincere convictions
- Feel tired and drained after our conversation
- Allow me to make my own decisions, and
- Give me enough room to discover for myself why I feel upset, and enough time to think for myself what is best.

Other signs that you are listening to me are that you:

- Do not tell me the funny story you were bursting to tell me
- Do not take my problem from me, but trust me to deal with it in my own way
- Resist giving me advice, and
- Graciously receive my gratitude by telling me it is good to know you have helped.

You are not listening to me when you:

- Say you understand before you know me well enough
- Have an answer for my problem before I have finished telling you what the problem is
- Interrupt me
- Finish my sentences for me
- Are communicating with someone else in the room, and
- Try to sort out the details and are not aware of the feelings.

Other signs that you are not listening to me are that you:

- Feel critical of my grammar or accent
- Need to feel successful
- Tell me about your experiences that make mine seem unimportant, and
- Refuse my thanks by saying you have not really done anything.



Positive Thoughts

Contributed by Patti Penny

In our Family Guide Volunteer Teleconference in January, our discussion brought to mind the poem “Positive Thoughts”. I want to share this with you. My son Luke loved poetry whether reading it or writing it. He found this poem in his young teens. Luke always had a positive outlook on things. If something didn't go right, no matter what, he would always say “Maybe tomorrow”. He always woke up in the morning with a smile on his face, “Today is going to be a good day”. I know he always had this poem on his mind. I often remember how he would pretty much quote this to me when he knew I was having a bad day. “If we don't have a positive outlook there is no hope.” Now when I read this (framed on my wall) I think of Luke and try and find the good in anything. It took a while, but I do try and start my day with “Positive Thoughts”.

Understanding life is difficult at times
Always questioning why things go wrong,
Take a good look around and try to reflect
On the simple things to keep you strong

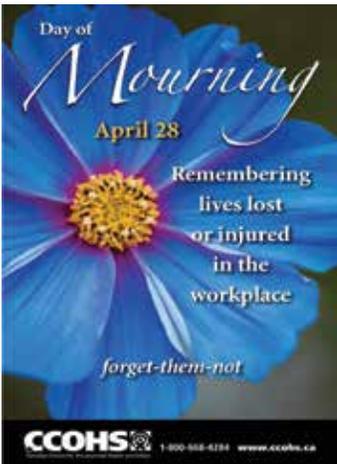
When problems arise and life is uneasy
You ask, why is this happening to me,
It's time to focus on the good in the world
And think of what things really could be
Misfortunes and mishaps are all part of life
And are truly hard to face,

Stay strong and believe and say to yourself
I'll get through this whatever the case
So remember in life there are ups and downs
And plenty of moral support,
To keep yourself in good healthy spirits
You must always have positive thoughts.



New family guides join support program

A new group of Volunteer Family Guides completed their introductory training and will join other Threads of Life VFGs spread right across Canada. VFGs are family members who have experienced a workplace tragedy. They support other families by listening to their stories and offering a shoulder to lean on. During the training, new guides learn about listening skills, dealing with stress and understanding grief, loss and depression. They also review the processes for investigations, inquiries and compensation. Their role is not to provide counselling or advice, but to let the grieving family members know they are not alone.



National Day of Mourning: April 28th

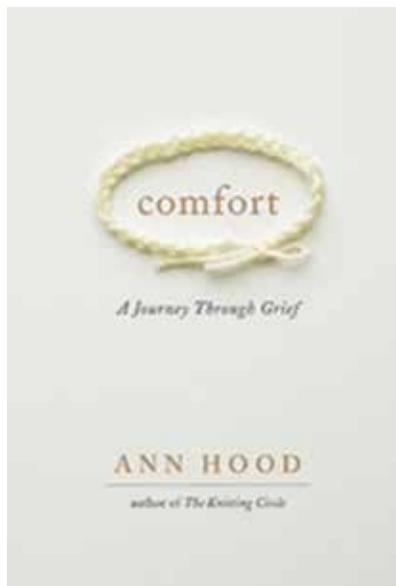


Every family affected by workplace tragedy has its anniversaries and its own memorials to honour lives lost or changed. But there's also a national day set aside to remember workers who have been killed, injured, or suffer from occupational disease. Since 1991, April 28 each year has been recognized as a National Day of Mourning in Canada. The Canadian Labour Congress had launched a day of remembrance in 1985, and eight years later the federal government passed the Mourning Day Act, declaring a national commemoration.

Ceremonies are held across the country – most are organized by local committees or organizations, and the programs vary from community to community. Each year, many members of the Threads of Life speakers bureau are asked to share their experience at Day of Mourning ceremonies. Watch for an event in your area.

BOOKCLUB reads - *Comfort: A Journey Through Grief*

Mark your calendar for Monday, May 12th at 7:00 pm EST and please plan to join in for the next book club discussion of Ann Hood's *Comfort: A Journey Through Grief*. Ann writes of the overwhelming anguish at the sudden death of her five-year-old daughter. Readers will recognize a kinship with the author as she reels from the empty words of comfort offered to her that do not ring true to her broken heart: "she is in a better place, time heals, go to church, try pilates". Ann Hood is an American writer who has published essays, short stories, and a number of novels in addition to this memoir. From her web site: "Slowly, slowly, I began to tell my own story of loss and grief and hope. You know how that first day at the beach when the ocean water is still so cold, you dip your toes in, then run out? Next try,



you get up to your ankles before you run? Then up to your calves, your thighs, until finally you are waist deep and you can dive in head first? That is how I wrote *Comfort*. I wrote a little, then retreated. A little more, a little more, until I was able to dive in. I am so proud of this book. In some ways, it is the hardest thing I've ever written. It is certainly the most necessary. It is raw and honest and filled with emotion and love. I hope when you read it, you too find some comfort in its pages."

Ann does not offer a way to recover from the grief of losing a child because she understands that, quite simply, one does not recover. She does hope that by sharing her story it will provide some comfort to others. To register, please send an email to book-club@threadsoflife.ca.

Walking for families of workplace tragedy



Photograph by Cara Grimshaw www.caragramshaw.com, used with permission

Seven days to fundraising success

Does the word “fundraise” strike fear into your heart? You’re not alone! For many people, the idea of asking for money is a phobia. But it’s not as hard as you think, if you follow Threads of Life’s new formula.

Did you know that if our 5,000 walkers each raised \$200, we would count one million dollars in donations? Imagine how we could advance our mission and vision! Two hundred may seem like a lot, but you’ll be amazed what can happen if you just ask!

How to raise \$200 in a week

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS ASK!

DAY 1	Sponsor Yourself		\$15
DAY 2	Ask Three Relatives For	\$20	\$60
DAY 3	Ask Six Friends For	\$10	\$60
DAY 4	Ask Three Coworkers For	\$10	\$30
DAY 5	Ask Three Neighbors For	\$5	\$15
DAY 6	Ask Your Spouse Or Partner		\$20
DAY 7	<i>Celebrate Your Success!</i>		<u>\$200</u>

Don't stop there! How high can you go?

Walk for safety; walk for life

On the first weekend in May, family members, friends, safety advocates and the public will put their best foot forward by joining a Steps for Life walk. We expect more than 5,000 walkers to join forces in support of families affected by workplace tragedy. And we have set our sights high: in 2014, Threads of Life hopes to raise at least \$675,000! You can help us get there – register online to walk in Steps for Life, and collect pledges and funds. If you can’t participate in person, you can still make a donation -- choose to sponsor a walker! It all starts at the Steps for Life web site, www.stepsforlife.ca.

Steps for Life Vital stats

- ☐ Most Steps for Life walks take place the first weekend in May (May 3 or 4 this year) to coincide with the start of NAOSH week. The Mississauga walk is May 10. Check online listings or your walk date.
- ☐ In 2013, Steps for Life raised more than **\$595,000**
- ☐ The first walk was held in 2005
- ☐ All funds raised support families through one-on-one peer guidance, regional family forums and this newsletter. Funds also allow our members to advocate for health and safety through our national speakers bureau.





Walk the safety talk with the Corporate Challenge

Attention workplaces! Looking for a way to “walk the talk” on health and safety? The corporate challenge is a great way to show off your commitment and support families of workplace tragedy at the same time. Form a team, fundraise together and participate in your local Steps for Life walk. You’ll be entered to compete against other Challenge teams across Canada!

How to join the Corporate Challenge:

- Assemble your team of five people. If you have more than five, form a second team and compete against each other!
- Commit to raising at least \$100 per team member in addition to the registration fee of \$10 each – use our online fundraising pages to gain donations from family, friends, neighbours and colleagues. Watch the thermometer on your personal page rise as the pledges come in!
- Rally as a team to participate in the walk on May 4, 2014 (in most communities – check www.stepsforlife.ca/locations for your date and location).

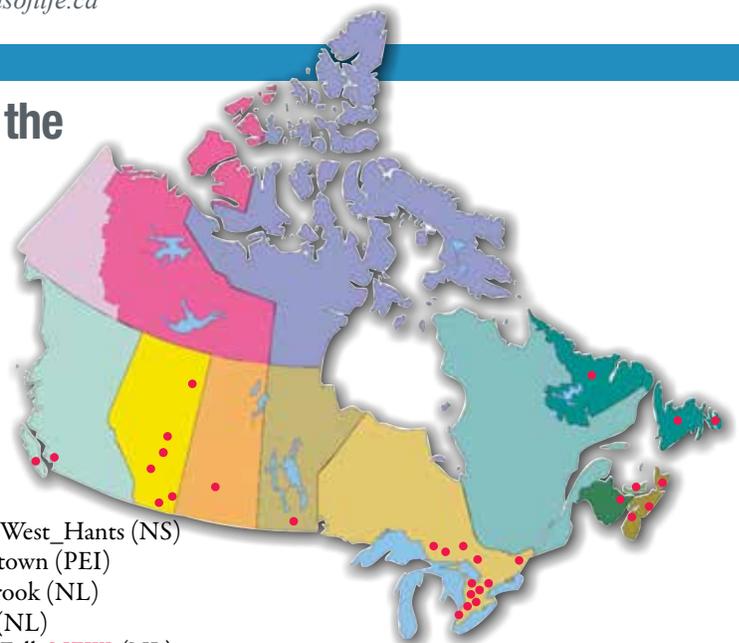
To get started visit www.stepsforlife.ca/register-to-walk/corporate-challenger or contact *Threads of Life* at 1-888-567-9490 or steps@threadsoflife.ca

Welcome aboard! New cities redraw the Steps for Life map for 2014

Metro Vancouver (BC)
 Greater Victoria (BC)
 Calgary (AB)
 Edmonton (AB)
 Fort McMurray (AB)
 Lethbridge (AB)
 Lloydminster **NEW!** (AB)
 Medicine Hat (AB)
 Red Deer (AB)
 Saskatoon (SK)
 Winnipeg (MB)
 Barrie/Midland (ON)
 Durham Region (ON)
 Guelph (ON)
 Hamilton/Niagara (ON)

Lindsay **NEW!** (ON)
 London (ON)
 Mississauga/Peel (ON)
 North Bay (ON)
 Orillia (ON)
 Ottawa (ON)
 Sarnia (ON)
 Sault Ste. Marie (ON)
 Sudbury (ON)
 Timmins (ON)
 Toronto (ON)
 Windsor (ON)
 Miramichi (NB)
 Halifax (NS)
 Sydney **NEW!** (NS)

Windsor/West_Hants (NS)
 Charlottetown (PEI)
 Corner Brook (NL)
 St. John's (NL)
 Churchill Falls **NEW!** (NL)



Fred Fretz



You might credit coincidence – or one of those small-world stories – for bringing Threads of Life and Fred Fretz together in a relationship that has lasted eight years so far. Fred has been a member of the board of directors since the first board formed in 2006. While he will step down from the board this year, he plans to continue as a Threads of Life volunteer.

In 2006, Threads of Life was looking for potential directors to serve on its first board. A letter came to Fred’s office at McCormick Canada in London. He happened to recognize Shirley Hickman’s name – both from the news stories of her son Tim’s death, and because Fred’s wife had taught Tim in elementary school.

“It came at a time when I was looking for more to do in the community,” Fred says. “It just hit a chord with me that this was the type of organization I would like to be involved with.”

Fred was McCormick’s vice-president of human relations until his retirement three years ago. The company is very committed to safety, he adds – another reason why volunteering for Threads of Life made good sense. McCormick invested heavily in safety training and equipment, and would shut lines down to address safety concerns when necessary.

Fred became one of the four community members of that original board. The Threads of Life board continues to be balanced between family members and representatives of business and the

public sector. He believes that mix is vital to keep the organization’s focus both on services to families and outreach to business and new partners.

In his years on the board, he says Threads of Life hasn’t changed in that it has stayed true to the vision and mission identified right from the start. But the scope of operation has changed, and that has been exciting, he adds.

“We have been able to touch more people in more parts of the country” while continually managing to secure the funding for this growth in services and programs. The board works mostly in the background, and by managing the finances and running a professional organization, it ensures there are “no distractions” for the staff and volunteers carrying out Threads of Life’s work.

He has always had fun working with the other board members, but Fred notes that his fondest memories are from the family forums. He has had the chance to attend forums across Canada over the years. Seeing the faces of family members as they attend for the first time and find comfort, gave meaning and energy to his work on the board.

“You really see Threads of Life in action and come away reminded that ‘this is really important,’” he says. “That’s the aspect that keeps you going.”

While his Threads of Life role has been a major commitment over eight years, Fred has other volunteer work – his newest project will be helping teach literacy and numeracy through an agency in his hometown of London. But he says now that he’s retired, he’s trying not to overschedule, allowing time for his four grandchildren and hobbies like golf. However, there’s a good chance Fred Fretz will still be around as a Threads of Life volunteer, helping with administration or with Steps for Life.

“I don’t see the need for this organization going away,” he says. Though we strive to eliminate workplace tragedy, “people keep getting hurt” and he foresees Threads of Life continuing to grow to have a greater presence in all provinces, and sharing its model with other countries around the world.



New speakers step up to the microphone

Eight family members representing the country from coast to coast took the challenge of joining the Threads of Life speakers bureau in February. The bureau provides family members with the chance to tell their stories to further the vision of eliminating workplace tragedies. Businesses and events book speakers as a way to increase safety awareness with audiences ranging from students to business managers.

Participants at the training developed their written stories and photographs into a presentation to be used for public speaking, and took turns presenting their speech during the weekend. Watch for profiles of our new speakers on the Threads of Life web site.

The speakers bureau includes more than 60 speakers across Canada. In 2013 Threads of Life speakers made presentations to roughly 8000 people. Since the bureau started in 2005, more than 50,000 people have heard the message about health and safety.

WorkSafeNB partnership expands services in East



Families in New Brunswick coping with workplace tragedy will have better access to support as the result of a new partnership between Threads of Life and WorkSafe New Brunswick. Signed in December, the agreement means the two organizations will work together to reach out to more families in the province and connect them to the Atlantic Family Forum, volunteer family guides and the speakers' bureau.

WorkSafeNB promotes workplace health and safety, administers the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and provides incident and

disability services to employers as well as compensation, medical aid, rehabilitation, and return-to-work services for employees. Under the new partnership, WorkSafeNB will provide information about Threads of Life to workers and their families. Threads of Life will work to recruit and train volunteer family guides and speakers in the province.

“We have always welcomed New Brunswick families to attend our family forum and use our services,” says Threads of Life Executive Director Shirley Hickman. “But this new partnership means we will be able to reach more grieving families and offer them support. We’ll also be able to help WorkSafeNB in their goal to build safer workplaces.”

Welcome to the Threads of Life family!

Safety, families benefit from renewed relationship

With their shared missions, Threads of Life and the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering are natural partners – and that relationship has been renewed for another two years.

The CSSE is the professional organization for health, safety and environment practitioners in Canada. Its 5000 members belong to 36 chapters across the country, promoting exchange of information and networking.

The recent Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations confirms the CSSE's role as a key supporter for Threads of Life's annual Steps for Life walk. CSSE also helps to promote Threads of Life to its membership. Many CSSE members are involved in organizing walks in their communities. CSSE also provides opportunities for Threads of Life speakers to help promote the importance of injury prevention.

“CSSE has been a vital partner for Threads of Life for years,” says Shirley Hickman, Threads of Life's executive director. “We're very pleased to be able to recognize our relationship, and we're looking forward to doing more good work with CSSE members in the coming years.”



Fundraiser in memory of Josh Malysh raises \$18,000

Led by ATB Financial and the Malysh family, Clymont Hockey Day raised more than \$18,000 for Threads of Life.

From left to right are Charles Malysh, Nick Lysachok (President of Clymont Community League), Shelly Malysh and Raeann Malysh.

Thanks to all the organizers and participants! Because of you, more families like Josh's will gain support following a workplace tragedy.





Young film-makers! Video contest for young worker safety

Who better to talk to a young worker about safety than another young worker? That's the principle behind the annual It's Your Job video contest.

The national contest offers cash prizes for the best safety video produced by high school students. The students' school receives a matching prize.

Students can enter the contest through their provincial labour ministry or compensation board – see the directions at www.labour.gc.ca/eng/health_safety/contest/index.shtml.

The top videos from each province and territory will be entered in the Canadian finals. A panel of celebrity judges, including Threads of Life's Shirley Hickman, will decide the final winners. The public is also invited to vote on their favourite video – visit the contest Youtube channel www.youtube.com/yourjobvotretravail during NAOSH week in May to cast your vote for the 2014 entries. You can also visit the channel any time to view previous winners.

Share your most creative moments. Sometimes writing can capture our thoughts and feelings the way no other means of expression can. Sharing these expressions can help you heal, help others understand and help them on their own journey. We welcome your stories, essays and poems.

Send your contributions to shaldane@threadsoflife.ca.

Coming Events

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

April 6-12 – Volunteer Week

April 28 – National Day of Mourning, more information on page 7

April 29-30 – Partners in Prevention conference, Mississauga – Visit Threads of Life and the LifeQuilt, more information at <http://www.healthandsafetyontario.ca/2012confohs4.aspx>

Steps for Life – May 4, 2014 (in most communities)

May 4-10 – North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) week, more information at https://www.csse.org/naosh_week/naosh_week.htm

May 23-25 – Atlantic Canada Family Forum, Atlantica Resort, Chester NS, more information at <http://threadsoflife.ca/upcoming-regional-family-forums/>

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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

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