

# threads OF LIFE

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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



## We walk for safety

You spread the word about workplace health and safety far and wide this spring. Thank you for organizing, donating and walking – you have helped make sure that families affected by workplace tragedy have the peer support they need, and you've told the world it's time to make all workplaces into safe places — *read some Steps for Life highlights on pages 10 and 11.*

see the rest of the crew on page 10



### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

*Bill Stunt*

All of you as Threads of Life families and supporters share the desire to stop all future workplace tragedies. Our mission as an organization is to build a country where work-related injuries, disease and fatalities are completely unacceptable. News reports through this winter and spring, though, have made that goal seem a long way off. So it was heartening to experience the buzz

of interest and attention paid to health and safety as Day of Mourning, Steps for Life and NAOSH week came together in April and May. Our Threads of Life speakers completed 24 presentations in eight provinces. Many of you participated in Day of Mourning ceremonies; and there were displays at trade shows and other events. Steps for Life walks painted 35 communities in safety yellow. And the social media wires were humming. We make the most of these dates to get our message of health and safety out to the public, and this May it did feel like people were listening.

In this issue, you'll read the stories of two women who found Threads of Life through their local Steps for Life walk, and have gone on to give their time and energy as volunteers. Read about the results of the walk, about one of our loyal volunteers Todd MacDonald, and about other fantastic events that have raised money for Threads of Life families. And don't miss Kate Kennington's reflection about the threads that tie all of us together.

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# Dan's story

by Carolyn Sim

Fall from ladder results in brain injury for loving father and spouse



Carolyn and Dan

## I first met Dan

on May 13, 1996. We started to see each other on weekends, when he didn't have his sons with him. The boys lived with their mom full time, and Dan saw the boys on weekends. After a couple of months, Dan allowed me to meet Robbie, who was eight years old, and Andrew, who was five. Andrew was an intense little boy, and he was never far from his daddy's side. I was struck by the love that Dan had for his sons, and what a dedicated dad he was, and those little boys sure adored their daddy. It didn't take very long for me to fall in love with Dan and his boys.

The boys started spending more time with us, and two years later I moved in with Dan. The boys eventually moved in with us on a permanent basis. I loved these boys like they were my own.

It was evident from the very beginning how much Dan and his boys loved motorcycles. They would ride all year from spring until fall. Once winter hit, ice tires would be put on, and the ice racing would begin. I remember thinking, what am I getting myself into? I was a brain injury

rehabilitation counsellor, and motorcycles are just not something that you should let you children ride.... let alone race! But Dan and the boys loved it! Motocross racing was a big part of our lives and we would travel to races throughout Ontario every weekend from spring through to fall. Every March Break, we would head to Florida for two weeks for the boys to practice their riding and racing skills before the motocross spring series started. Dan looked forward to our Florida vacation because he could really unwind, and just hang out with his family and friends. With the other Motocross families we would have potlucks and campfires, which Dan always kept stoked.

Dan was quiet but when he spoke, people tended to listen. Everyone used to joke about how Dan dressed because it was always comfort first. You'd often find him wearing boxers or pyjama pants, especially if we were at the track. If his clothes were clean and didn't have too many holes in them... then they were fine to wear.

He was close to his parents and his siblings, and we always made time on holidays for family. He was a quick learner,

good at whatever sport or task he put his mind to.

### My personal injury

In June 2004, we were at a two-day race in Walton, Ontario and I needed to go into town for some groceries. In a Tim Horton's parking lot I was the victim of road rage. I was crushed from the waist down. Our lives changed drastically that day. I was wheelchair-bound, and uncertain if I'd ever walk again. I was in constant pain, and struggled to do even the simplest tasks. Rehabilitation was a long uphill battle, and I worked hard to regain mobility, keep a positive attitude and limit the impact my injuries had on the boys. Dan was my rock and really motivated me especially when I thought I couldn't push myself any further. We bought a new, single story home which would be more manageable for me. Our move-in date was August 1 2007. We finally had something to look forward to: our new home, and a new beginning.

### That day—Monday July 9th

On Monday, July 9, 2007, Dan got up early. For a few years he had been working for a window company and would travel Monday to Friday, calling home every evening. This week he was working in Owen Sound on a private home. I got the dreaded call late that afternoon from Dan's co-worker Joe, to say that Dan had an accident at work but was ok, and had just gone to get some x-rays. Joe told me Dan was working from a ladder, screwing a plate onto the window, when he slipped somehow, and fell backwards into an open, uncovered window well. He landed on his head. They lowered a ladder into the well. Dan somehow managed to climb out and an ambulance took him to the hospital. I made Joe promise to call me back as soon as Dan came back from x-rays.

I don't know how I knew... but I just knew that it was bad, and that Danny was never coming home again. A friend came to wait with me. When Joe called back, it was hard to understand him; he was very upset, then I heard him say that Dan had gone into a coma, and had a severe brain injury. I almost dropped the phone; I couldn't breathe; I felt like I was suffocating. Everything started to swirl around me.

The doctor at the Owen Sound hospital called to say that he was doing an

emergency brain surgery to reduce swelling, and that it looked very grim for Dan. Once he was out of surgery, they would send him to St. Michael's Hospital, and we were to be ready to go to Toronto. The doctor made it clear that Dan might not even make it to Toronto as he was in a very grave state, and that we were to pray for Dan, and be prepared to say good-bye. My world turned upside down, and came to a crashing halt!

Dan made it through that first operation and the trip to Toronto, where he was rushed into surgery even before we arrived. The neurosurgeon at St. Michael's said that every minute was crucial in saving Dan. The doctor left no doubt about how serious things were.

Dan made it through the surgery. The next 10 days were like riding an out of control rollercoaster. We kept a vigil by Danny's side. I've never prayed so much in my life. But tragically, despite our prayers and tears, Dan would not improve. I knew Dan's wishes about life support, I knew what I had to do. Eleven days after Dan was injured, I explained to my sons, and Dan was removed from the life support, and transferred to a small room outside the trauma care unit. I placed a laminated picture of the boys in Danny's hand. Robbie brought his favourite motocross jersey and draped it across his legs. On July 24, Dan started to fade away. Drew had taught himself to play the guitar, and Dan was so proud of him. It was mid-afternoon when I heard the guitar music faintly down the hall, and I just knew it must be our Drew. It grew louder until it was outside Dan's hospital room. We all had tears running down our faces because it was such a touching moment and tribute to his dad. Robbie and Drew each took some time alone to talk with their dad, and say their goodbyes. Approximately 10 minutes after the boys left, Dan passed away while his parents and I sat quietly with him.

#### How would we go on without him?

The funeral was a real tribute to Dan. There were so many people there that they could not all fit in the building. And as per Danny's wishes he was buried in his pj's and his favourite pair of jeans and bare feet. I think I was on auto pilot for the funeral. I couldn't believe this was actually happening. Since bikes were a huge part of Danny's life, we designed our own headstone, with a picture of Dan riding his Honda on it. Our motocross family established the "Dan Pelletier Memorial Award"

in Dan's memory. Drew handed out the first award two weeks after Dan was buried.

We moved into our new home six days after we buried Dan. This was not supposed to be my life! I stayed strong for my children and family on the outside but I felt like I lost everything – my life, my best friend, my husband, the one person I could always count on. I had a large memorial garden built in my back yard, for the family and me to enjoy. It's beautiful and I find that I can talk to Dan there, and find it so peaceful throughout the seasons.

Dan's family and I attended the court hearings. It was extremely hard on the boys and me. Dan's parents, who always seemed young, aged considerably. Charges were laid under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

#### Two recommendations to the Ministry of Labour did come out of the inquest.

- 1 That the general contractor on a residential construction site be responsible for a daily inspection of the entire job site prior to work commencing and should any hazards be determined, to be corrected immediately.
- 2 That the general contractor on a residential construction site be responsible to submit to any sub-contractors any obvious dangerous situations unique to that job site prior to work commencing.

In April 2009, my cousin told me about a walk called Steps for Life for those affected by workplace tragedy. I attended the walk and knew that I wanted to join the association known as Threads of Life. I met people that understood what I was feeling and really got it! I joined the speakers bureau and became a volunteer family guide. I want to be able to be there for families who are dealing with loss of a loved one, and let them know that they are not alone.

Life has been a challenge without Dan. I was not the legal guardian of the boys, and it caused many issues for me. Finally I legally adopted the boys. Our sons stopped racing motorcycles every weekend, which had been the main focus in our lives. My sons have had to learn to live without their Dad being there to support them in their life challenges, and they miss him very much. Robbie misses his one-on-one time spent working on their motorcycles. He became a dad himself, and Dan is not here to share this with him. Drew is very quiet about his memories of his dad. He has gone on to graduate from college and university. He now lives with his girlfriend, and is working full time at a job he loves.

I'm moving on in life but will always miss Dan. No one ever thinks that this kind of tragedy could happen to their family... but it does.



Dan and his sons loved motorcycles

# Keeping Stephen's memory alive

Mom's healing journey takes her to Australia and full circle

by Betty Evans



Stephen saved enough money to spend a year travelling and working in Australia.

## Stephen was born

John Stephen Lawrence Evans December 28, 1983. He was Magoo to me, Steve or Easy to others. I would spend hours sitting with him, staring and talking to this most precious gift. Although he didn't get the nickname "Easy" until he was nine, his calm, confident, cheerful nature presented itself early. An only child, Stephen was adored by grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Although his father and I ended our marriage in 1986 the strong bond that had been formed in the first three years of his life remains intact to this day.

Stephen and I moved to Calgary in November 1987. That Christmas, just three days before his fourth birthday, all he wanted was an O'Henry Chocolate Bar! After he found that in his stocking he was happy and it took the rest of the day to coax him into opening the rest of his gifts! He formed a truly special bond with his grandma, who sometimes felt he should spend the day with her rather than at the child care centre. Stephen quickly made friends with the other kids on our block. Mike became his best friend in Grade 4 and Mike's family became Stephen's home away from home. He was given the nickname "Easy" because he was just that, "Easy" to have around. His teachers would talk

about his inner confidence and quiet self-assured manner. Over time our house became known as "Street Hockey Central". Our coat closet stored the goalie pads and hockey sticks. There was nothing better than listening to a blow by blow account of the game afterward - his exuberance was overflowing and he was in his glory having scored a goal or made an assist.

Stephen graduated from Mount Royal College in 2007 with a degree in International Business and Supply Management. Always very shrewd, but not stingy, with his money, he had saved enough to take a year and travel to Australia with a work visa.

Stephen left Calgary on Thanksgiving weekend 2007 and flew to Sydney, Australia. On the plane he sat beside a fellow who just happened to have worked with his cousin Clayton. They struck up a friendship and spent the first three months together. In February I received a phone call - he was tired of the partying, bored with his job (and perhaps a little homesick). After some discussion, he decided he would do what he had gone to do in the first place - learn how to surf. By April 2008 he had earned certificates in surf and swim rescue. And he was surfing!

In May Stephen decided it was time to move on. He travelled up the east coast of

Australia and down into the outback, and in July landed a job at a cattle station 500 km north of Alice Springs - the second thing he wanted to do in Australia. As there was no wireless cell phone access, phone calls were few, but from his voice, so tired he could hardly talk from long hours fixing cattle fences, I knew he was happy and proud of what he was doing. He talked about "Lindsay" an older fellow who was his mentor on the cattle station. The last phone call came at the end of August. He told me he wasn't ready to come home and wanted to apply for an extension to his work visa. My response was OK - but I needed a hug - could I come to Australia for Christmas? The answer was a resounding yes! We had a plan.

The doorbell rang around 9:30 pm Saturday, September 6, 2008. I was in bed. Looking out my bedroom window I saw a police car on the street and two police officers at the door. Was I the mother of John Stephen Lawrence Evans? Yes. Did I know where he was? Yes, he was working on a cattle station in the Australian Outback. "Mrs. Evans, I am sorry to tell you your son has been killed in a motor vehicle accident." That is how my normal ended.

Friends and family came to support me and deal with the authorities. One of Stephen's friends brought his ashes home, and we held a celebration of his life on September 18.

Grief set in - feeling lost while trying to put on a "brave face", and underneath, despair I never knew could exist. When Stephen's belongings arrived home, the two most precious items were his journal and his camera. The first year I clung to visits from Stephen's friends, and to the idea of going to Australia after the first anniversary of his death and re-tracing his steps as he had written in his journal. Lindsay, Stephen's mentor on the cattle station, came in July 2009. We heard for the first time about the accident and what life was like working on that particular cattle station. Lindsay had come to love Stephen and felt he had also lost a son.

On September 10, 2009, I flew to Australia with friends. Our travels took us to the places and the people he had met along the way. Going to the outback was the hardest. I realized I couldn't go to the

cattle station – I just wasn't ready, so we stayed at a roadhouse an hour's drive away. We were only 10 minutes from a sacred aboriginal site called "Devil's Marbles" that Stephen talked about and found to be very peaceful. I too felt the peace and we identified a place I now call "Stephen's Tree" where we left some natural artifacts from Alberta. The owners of the cattle station came to the roadhouse for dinner – the meeting was an incredibly emotional one with lots of unspoken words, underneath the bravado of talking about life in the outback. It was easy to see from the father's attitude he was not one who wanted to accept responsibility for his actions and his wife and son were living a strained life.

Coming home was difficult – having lived a year just to make that journey, the emptiness set in and I was faced with the reality of the rest of my life without Stephen. In June 2010 the police investigation and coroner's report was released. The passenger's side wheel fell off the vehicle Stephen had been driving, causing the vehicle to roll over on top of him. Stephen suffered a complete rupture of the aorta and died shortly thereafter. The investigation determined the vehicle had been inadequately maintained – in particular the washers and nuts which held the left front wheel on the axle were unserviceable. There was a risk that the wheel would fall off when in motion. This was unknown to the owners of the cattle station.

One morning in September 2011, I woke up and realized I had fallen into a hole of self-pity. Alcohol had become the panacea for my pain. I looked at a poster I had put on my bedroom wall with a picture of Stephen and read:

### Honoring You

weeping and aching,  
i longed to honor your passing.  
i longed to honor your life.  
searching everywhere,  
i found only one answer.  
honor myself.  
become all that i am.  
and carry you inside that beauty.

© Terri St. Cloud

I couldn't wait any longer to know if Northern Territory Worksafe were going to lay charges or if I was going to get an opportunity to write an impact statement – I needed to create a new normal for myself and in so doing keep Stephen's memory

alive. I reached out for help and began the journey of healing. Two weeks later I received an email saying charges were going to be laid and I would be advised about court proceedings. The middle of

that I had completed."

The question I asked was "Did the owners of the cattle station have heart to heart conversations with themselves - ensuring their employees were safe?"

**"I needed to create a new normal for myself and in so doing keep Stephen's memory alive. I reached out for help and began the journey of healing.**

November I was advised the cattle station owners were going to plead guilty to negligence and the court hearing would be on November 30, 2011 in Alice Springs. After convincing family and friends that I needed to go and that I was strong enough to go, I wrote my impact statement and prepared to travel. I had made the decision not to call it a "victim" impact statement because I no longer wanted to think of myself as a victim but a survivor. My statement to the



Stephen at work in the Australian Outback.  
judge included these lines from Stephen's journal, dated August 17, 2007:

"The last two days have been unbelievable. I've grown up so much. After work on Wednesday I had a heart to heart with myself and admitted that I'm not giving it my all and that I can work harder. So I decided that I'd break the day into quarters and my goal was to stay mentally awake and energetic for each quarter. On Thursday I noticed a great difference in myself and I was proud at the end of the day with the work

The cattle station owners were fined. I spoke briefly with the son after the hearing. I could feel his sadness and genuine remorse – unfortunately his father made it difficult for him to truly express his feelings and I knew he was suffering. I too was challenged – wanting to be compassionate and forgiving and still feeling the anger.

After the court hearing I drove the 500 km to Devil's Marbles to re-visit "Stephen's Tree". To just be able to sit and breathe on this sacred and spiritual ground, knowing that this was what Stephen felt too, was the gift I brought back home with me and the gift I needed to continue moving forward.

In April, 2013 on a lunch break I saw a Steps for Life display and felt a rush of emotion. I told the representative my story and asked if I could walk and I did. In September 2013 I attended the Family Forum in Edmonton. Like many others, I experienced the healing from listening and sharing with others who know your pain and suffering, and who also want to heal and become "the best that they can be". Threads of Life has offered me a purpose which I hope can be of support to others and to assist in creating a culture change with regard to workplace safety.

September 2014 was the sixth anniversary of Stephen's death and I realized I had come full circle to find a new normal after three years of feeling lost and three years of learning acceptance and learning how to live without Stephen's physical presence. Stephen's memory is alive and well in me and his family and friends. Living without "Easy" hasn't been easy - there are and will always be "those days" of just plain sadness and "what if's". For the most part however, my new normal is living one day at a time with Stephen in my heart – knowing he is always with me and being so very grateful he has shown me that on so many occasions.



### Powerful words.

Without question there is incredible strength that the Threads of Life families gain from one another. Our families are deeply connected by their shared experience. However, that connection is far greater than the commonality of a workplace tragedy. That which binds us so strongly is the thread of loss. The journeys of the three streams are very different roads but in each we all lose our identity of who we are. The question of 'Who am I?' as each individual struggles to find that new normal can be heard again and again. In time, we each must come to terms with the reality that the person we were before no longer exists.

For those who have experienced a fatality there is a physical person missing. For those living with a life-altering injury or an occupational disease, the person is still here, however, very changed. For everyone the future is forever altered. Dreams, hopes, plans, trust in the world, all are shattered.

So many people ask, "When will you be back to normal? When will you be you again?". What they don't understand is that person is gone. As individuals we each have to come to terms with this and ultimately mourn for the person we used to be.

We can all be extremely grateful to our founding members and especially Shirley Hickman who knew from the beginning that the experiences of the three streams are more similar than they are different. All are bound together by grief and loss. For those

### Our thread of loss and the power of our strength together

by Kate Kennington

*Each worker and family member who has been affected by a workplace tragedy is a thread in the quilt of life.*

*Each thread, by itself, cannot stand alone, but when woven together provides strength.*

of you who have attended the Reflections Ceremony at a family forum you will understand the shared bond. Shirley acknowledges this as she gently says that there is no worst story. They are each the worst story.

At the advanced Volunteer Family Guide training in November we talked about our common experience of loss rather than the different journeys that the three streams face. There was tremendous discussion as everyone realized that we all lost who we were no matter what our tragedy had been. No one was the same person and we all struggle with that elusive new normal. We know that change is inevitable but it should not be like this.

Our wise facilitator, Roy Ellis remarked how during our time together at the training, we were holding each others' hearts in our hands. I think this compassion and care extends to all of the interactions between families and especially at the family forums. It is our shared loss which allows us to be vulnerable and completely honest with each other, creating that safe place that doesn't exist anywhere else.

Threads of Life is the club no one wants to join but each time a new family finds us I am grateful that they have connected with us. I am even more grateful that as they have the opportunity to meet with other families I know that safe place will be extended to them and their hearts will be held with care and love.

### I Cry

I cry when I see you in pain  
I cry when I try to help but it doesn't work  
I cry when I get upset because you're in pain, then get mad at myself for getting upset  
I cry because I know how hard you work at being "normal", being active, try to do as much as you once did.  
I cry for a life we once had, so happy and full of life and love.  
There is still love, so much love, but now we use that love to try and dry the tears  
I cry



by Debb Bonnis

## Todd MacDonald

Every year volunteers across Canada help Threads of Life to plan and execute the Steps for Life walk. This volunteer profile features one of those volunteers, Todd MacDonald.

Todd is a busy man. As a young father and the District HSE Manager for PCL Intracon Power in Edmonton, Todd's plate is pretty full. Yet this dedicated safety professional still carves out time to volunteer for several safety organizations and has been the walk chair for the Steps for Life walk in Edmonton for three years.

Todd's affiliation with the walk began shortly after PCL became a national sponsor. He was asked by his company to attend the walk in Edmonton. In 2013, when Steps for Life Edmonton needed a new chairperson, Todd stepped up and he has been leading the Edmonton committee ever since. The Edmonton walk has continued to grow under Todd's leadership and is one of the largest walks in the country. This year the Edmonton walk had 286 participants and raised more than \$57,400.

Todd recalls one moment at the Edmonton walk when the need for Threads of Life really became apparent to him. "A family approached me, very upset, wondering how they could get a memory lane sign for their loved one," he said. "That's what gets to me; the spouses and kids who are left behind. I remember looking out in the audience that day and wondering how many families were affected. The impact on families reinforces my commitment. That is why we do what we do..."

Todd says he is most gratified when he reaches out to safety organizations and gets them to engage with Threads of Life. Recently, Todd was representing Threads of Life at a trade show in Edmonton when a spontaneous donation

by Colleen Youngblut



Todd MacDonald, centre, with members of the Edmonton Steps for Life committee

and auction of signed hockey jerseys resulted in a \$6500 donation to Threads of Life.

Todd is but one of hundreds of volunteers across this country that make the Steps for Life Walk possible. Without the support of volunteers the walk would not exist. We thank Todd, and all of you who volunteer your time to Threads of Life and the Steps for Life walk. Your dedication is truly making a difference.

## Recognizing 10 Years of Volunteering

Volunteers are the heart of Threads of Life, and this spring three of our long-term volunteers were recognized by the Ontario government for ten years of volunteer service. Joanne Wade, and Liz and Fred Webley

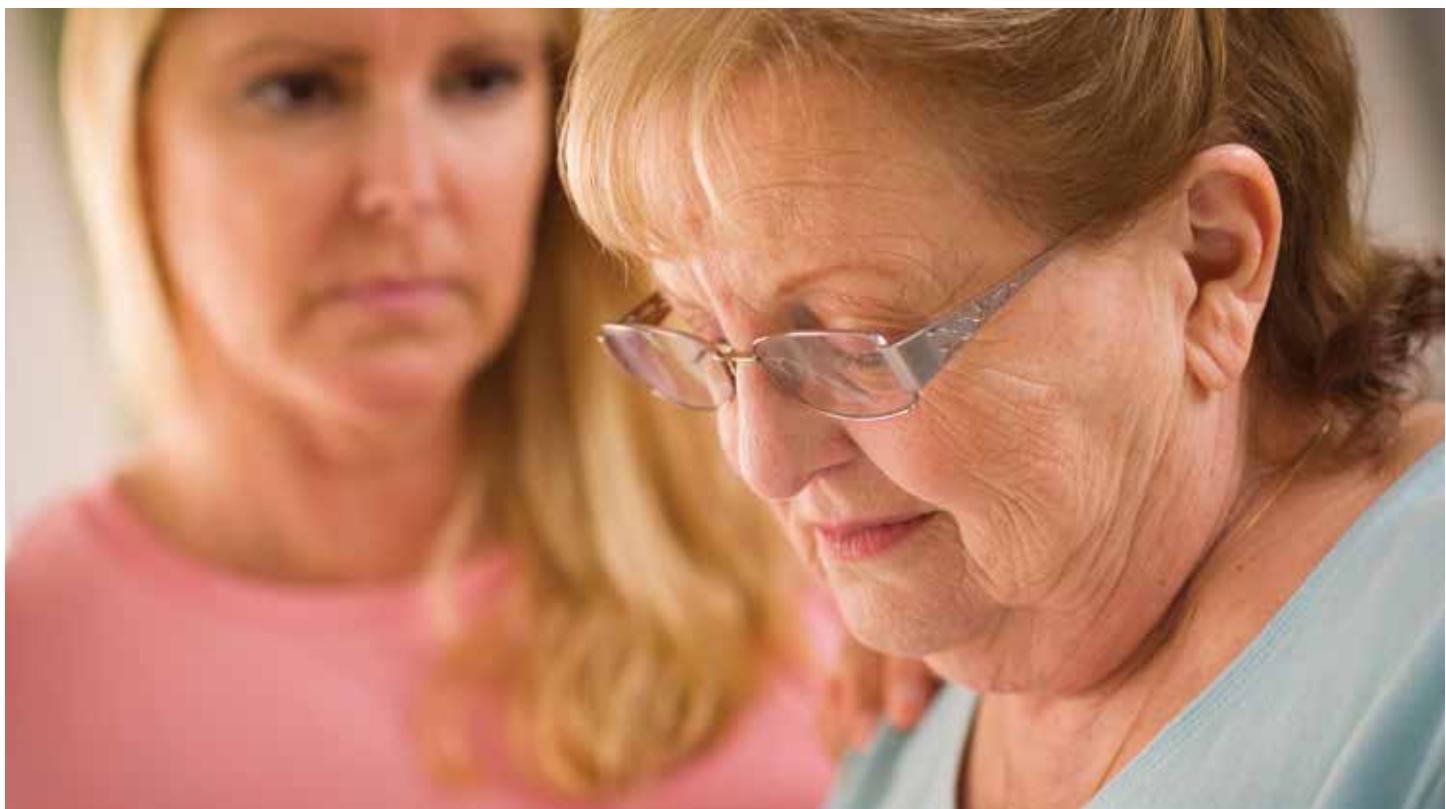


Joanne Wade was recognized for ten years' service

have been with Threads of Life since the very beginning and have contributed to every aspect of our programs. *Thank you, Liz, Fred and Joanne, for all you do!*



Fred and Liz Webley receive their Ontario Volunteer Service awards



The last issue of *Threads* looked at the first of William Worden's four tasks of mourning, accepting the reality of loss. Worden is a professor of psychology, and his four tasks are one of the common ways of understanding grief. While they are numbered, people may not necessarily experience these tasks in order, and they may move back and forth between tasks.

**TASK 2**, as outlined in his book *Grief Counselling and Grief Therapy*, is to process the pain of grief. Worden writes: "People can short-circuit Task 2 in any number of ways, the most obvious being to cut off their feelings and deny the pain that is present. Sometimes people hinder the process by avoiding painful thoughts....Some people handle it by stimulating only pleasant thoughts of the deceased, which protect them from the discomfort of unpleasant thoughts. Idealizing the dead, avoiding reminders of the dead, and using alcohol or drugs are still other ways in which people keep themselves from accomplishing Task 2."

*Threads of Life's* Resource Manual for Volunteer Family Guides speaks to this task:

The feelings associated with a significant loss are painful. People can feel and express grief in many different ways. And their feelings are not the same from one moment to the next. Feeling the feelings associated with the loss can be most difficult to work through. These feelings are very painful and confusing, and most people are not comfortable expressing or observing them. People prefer to be in control, but feelings that come with the loss of a loved one may feel out of control. Therefore, both the grieving person and the community tend to judge the expression of overwhelming feelings in a negative way.

Outsiders often express shock and disbelief when they hear

that a friend or relative has been killed, injured or made ill in the workplace. Although these feelings are appropriate for someone just learning the news, family members or affected workers may find them disturbing because they:

- May not be experiencing the same feelings each time they tell their story to someone new
- May be detached from their story at that moment and therefore, may fear that they have become callous
- May feel angry at being reminded that they have to live with this shock every day, or
- May be reminded that they are suddenly seen in a new way, perhaps pitied by the horrified person who has just been told the story.

Expressing feelings is important to healing. The grieving person must find support and a non-judgmental environment to express his or her complex feelings safely. When feelings are bottled up, they create internal pressure. Think of a garden hose that has a knot in it. When the water is turned on, it can't escape. It just builds up pressure and may even burst. If the water is allowed to flow and pour out, the pressure is spread out and the garden benefits from it. When the grieving person is allowed to express feelings while being supported and not judged, he or she is able to determine what to do next to care for him or herself.

## Families win with Charity of Choice hockey

Hockey is always in season, and so is fundraising for Threads of Life families. Two wonderful events adopted Threads of Life as their Charity of Choice this spring, and their donations will give family members the assurance that they're not alone when they cope with the grief and chaos of a workplace tragedy.

The fourth annual Day of Mourning Ball Hockey Tournament in Edmonton Alberta raised \$10,637.80 through direct donations and the proceeds from a silent auction. Organized by members of the Alberta Construction Safety Association, the ball hockey tournament is volunteer-powered, with 25 people giving their time as organizers, score-keepers, referees and cooks. Thanks to all the volunteers, players, organizers, as well as businesses which donated food and prizes! Through your generosity, family members will be able to attend the Western Canada Family Forum, where they can learn healthy coping skills and meet other families who share their experience.

### Day of Mourning ball hockey, Edmonton



Top: First-place ball hockey team claim their trophy

Bottom: A less-competitive moment during the annual Day of Mourning ball hockey tournament.

## PARTNERS & FUNDRAISING

National construction firm EllisDon adopted Threads of Life as the Charity of Choice for its annual hockey tournament in Vaughan Ontario. This year's event raised \$7,305. A special thanks to Dan Fleming, Corporate Director Safety Training, and to all the players and volunteers for your support. Thanks also to contributors:

- EllisDon, Toronto & Ottawa
- LIUNA
- Millwrights Local 2309
- Interior Systems Contractors Association
- Ironworkers Local 721
- Carpenters & Allied Workers Local 27
- Maintenance and Construction Skilled Trade Council
- Sheet Metal Workers Local 30
- Sheet Metal Workers Local 51
- United Association Local 787

### EllisDon hockey tournament, Vaughan



Top: EllisDon's Dan Fleming, front right, announces the tournament's initial fundraising results with Scott MacKay of Threads of Life. The final total reached more than \$7,300!

Bottom: EllisDon employees and friends adopted Threads of Life as charity of choice for their two-day tournament



Yellow is the colour of safety, and a big swath of Canada was painted yellow in May, as Steps for Life brought walkers out in 35 communities from coast to coast.

Safety professionals, business leaders, community members and Threads of Life families demonstrated their commitment to safety by walking, volunteering and donating as part of the annual event. And together, you raised more than \$580,000 – although that preliminary total is expected to rise as final donations and tallies continue to come in. Steps for Life is one of the major sources of funding for Threads of Life. The money raised this year will ensure that family members who've experienced a workplace tragedy are able to find a shoulder to lean on by being paired with a trained Volunteer Family Guide. It will give Threads of Life the resources to reach out to more families and will help to train new speakers who can talk to workplaces and conferences about the importance of health and safety.

"Sometimes health and safety is frustrating, because we feel like we can't make a difference," says Threads of Life Executive Director Shirley Hickman. "But through Steps for Life, people really do make a difference, because those dollars go directly to help families affected by workplace tragedy, and to help change the workplace culture in this country."

The walk itself contributes to that culture shift by attracting attention from the media and the public, building on the health and safety themes of Day of Mourning on April 28, and NAOSH week in early May.

Thank you to all our walkers, volunteers, donors and sponsors for helping families now and building safer workplaces for the future!



## A warm and fuzzy feeling for Steps for Life

Many strong threads connect Threads of Life families, volunteers and supporters. And Saskatoon family member Julia Unruh offered a very real illustration when she decided to create a beautiful hand-woven shawl to be raffled off to one of our Steps for Life family teams. Many of our family members who have experienced a workplace tragedy create their own teams to participate and fundraise for Steps for Life. And those who registered by the early bird deadline were entered in the draw. The shawl incorporates colours used by Threads of Life and Steps for Life. Julia says it feels like "wrapping yourself into a hug when you need one." The winner of the shawl was Karen Poirier of Edmonton.

*Thanks Julia for the hug.*

**ff** See the insert  
in this issue  
for a complete list  
of our Steps for  
Life corporate  
sponsors.

# Corporate challengers lead the way

One of the big successes of the 2015 Steps for Life walk was our Corporate Challenge, with a record-breaking 55 teams taking part! The unbeatable Alta-Fab Scallywags, from Edmonton Alberta, claimed the national title for an incredible fourth year in a row!

The Corporate Challenge is a friendly competition that gives employers and employees the chance to support families affected by workplace tragedy, make everyone more aware of health and safety, and demonstrate their leadership. Corporate Challenge teams raise money by collecting pledges from co-workers, family and friends; and hosting events like barbecues, bake sales, dunk tanks and tournaments.

A huge thank you to all the teams and participants – because of you, more family members will find the support they need after a workplace tragedy, and will be able to devote their energy to promoting safer workplaces.

The 2015 Steps for Life walk is the first time Threads of Life has also recognized our regional winners in the corporate challenge. Here are the leaders from across Canada:

## NATIONAL WINNER

Alta-Fab Scallywags

## REGIONAL WINNERS

### WESTERN CANADA

PCL Intracon Power Rangers, Edmonton, AB

### CENTRAL CANADA

Black and McDonald Steps for Safety, Durham, ON

### EASTERN CANADA

EM&I Stantec, Halifax, NS

**HONOURABLE MENTION:** Finish Line, Friends and Family, Walking in Memory of Marc Nelson

## New walk communities hit the ground running

*Welcome, Saint John, Regina and Grande Prairie-Peace Region!*

Three brand-new communities joined the Steps for Life club this year, and they are off to an amazing start. Between them, Saint John NB, Regina SK and Grande Prairie-Peace Region AB raised more than \$32,000! Thanks so much to all of you for your commitment to health and safety and to families of workplace tragedy.

## STEPS FOR LIFE



# What were you wondering?

Do you have a question about how grief affects you, or about the investigation process after a tragedy? Even a question about Threads of Life? We have a new blog that tries to provide valuable answers and information for all our Threads of Life families and supporters. A blog is just like a regular letter from a friend – except you read it online. But we need to know what you want to know. Check out the blog, and if you have a suggestion for a post, please let us know! The blog is also a new way for you to share your ideas and experiences. Post a comment in response to what you've read, or write your own post! For information, contact Susan Haldane: shaldane@threadsoflife.ca.

Threads of Life blog:  
[www.threadsoflife.ca/blog/](http://www.threadsoflife.ca/blog/)

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.

Quelques-uns de nos bulletins sont maintenant offerts en français. Veuillez visiter notre site Web, vous rendre à la page du bulletin Threads of Life ou nous appeler pour obtenir une copie.

## Coming Events

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

Central Canada Family Forum

**October 2 – 4, 2015**

Kempenfelt Conference Centre,  
Barrie, Ontario

Western Canada Family Forum

**October 23 – 25, 2015**

Location to be announced

For more information on family forums:  
[threadsoflife.ca/for-families/family-forums/](http://threadsoflife.ca/for-families/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.

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### HOW TO REACH US

Toll-free: 1-888-567-9490

Fax: 1-519-685-1104

Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support – Threads of Life

P.O. Box 9066  
1795 Ernest Ave.  
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[www.threadsoflife.ca](http://www.threadsoflife.ca)  
[www.stepsforlife.ca](http://www.stepsforlife.ca)

The views expressed in Threads are those of the authors. The information contained in Threads has been compiled from sources believed to be reliable. However, the Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support – Threads of Life assumes no responsibility for the correctness, sufficiency or completeness of the information.



**THANK YOU!** Steps for Life benefits from the support of sponsors both on a national and community level. Thank you for demonstrating your leadership and your commitment to health and safety!

#### National sponsors

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OF LIFE

Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support

#### Champions

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Alberta Construction Safety Association  
Alcoa Foundation  
Bruce Power  
Building Trades of Alberta -Charitable Foundation  
Coast 101.1 FM  
CSSE Hamilton Chapter  
Dynaat, Dynamic Advertising Technologies  
Emergent Biosolutions  
George Wellington Esquire Club  
Home Depot of Canada  
Infrastructure Health & Safety Association  
KGHM International  
Lethbridge Regional Safety Committee  
Levitt-Safety  
McNally Construction  
Ministry Of Labour of Ontario  
SAFE Work Manitoba  
Saskatchewan Workers Compensation Board  
Trinity Safety & Training  
Unifor Canada  
Workplace Health Safety & Compensation Commission NL

#### Community Leaders

Aecon Group  
Apache Canada  
ArcelorMittal Hamilton East  
BC Construction Safety Alliance  
Canadian Tire - Dundas  
Carpenters Millwrights College & Local 579  
CRCS DKI  
CSSE South Saskatchewan Chapter  
Gilmar Crane Service  
Guildfords  
Halifax International Airport Authority  
I.B.E.W. Local 2351  
Kubota Materials Canada Corporation  
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Nalcor Energy Churchill Falls  
North America Construction (1993)  
Northern Mat and Bridge  
Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education  
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Saskatchewan Safety Council

Sobeys Halifax  
Step Energy Services  
Tacten Industrial  
Top All Drywall  
Workers Compensation Board Of PEI  
Zare Paralegal Services P. C.  
Carpenters' Local 1256

#### Community Supporters

Areva Resources Canada  
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Claybar Contracting  
CSSE - Northern Light Chapter  
Gateway Safety Services  
Goldcorp Porcupine Gold Mines  
Hazmasters  
I.B.E.W. Local 1615  
I.B.E.W. Local 2330  
Precon Manufacturing  
S-A-S Petroleum Technologies.  
Samuel, Son, And Company  
Schlumberger  
Schumacher Lions Club  
Timmins Construction Association

#### Community Advocates

3M Canada - Personal Safety Division  
Amaritech Electric & Controls  
ATCO Electric  
ATCO Gas  
BCT -Clean Harbors  
Bexson Construction  
Black & McDonald Limited - Power Generation  
Bruin's Plumbing & Heating  
CSSE London  
Cogeco Cable Canada  
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