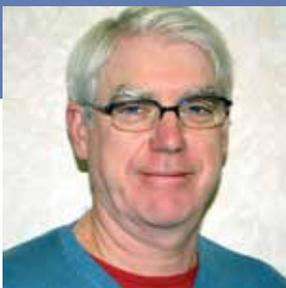




HOPE AFTER LOSS

Even as the days get darker, there are still signs of light and hope, if you look for them. Read the fourth in a series of articles about grief, “Reinvesting in life after a loss” on page 7, and don’t miss the reflection titled “We rise again!” on page 6.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Bill Stunt

Candle-lighting is an important part of our ritual at Threads of Life, when we get together as family members. At family forums we light candles to symbolize our three streams – workplace fatalities, life-altering injuries and occupational disease. And we light individual candles to honour our loved ones and our own

experience of workplace tragedy. As Shirley Hickman always reminds us, the candles offer both warmth and light – a very real sign of life and hope.

At Threads of Life, we often speak of a “network of hope and healing”. Hope is what links us as people who have lived through life’s darkest moments. At the family forums we can see that hope passed from person to person as new families discover it is possible to find a new way of being, even after the worst of tragedy.

Candles are also important to many faith and cultural traditions, especially at this time of year. I hope we can each light a candle of hope this season – not only for ourselves and our loved ones, but for all the other families out there who are finding it hard to make their way out of the dark.

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A 13-year journey with workplace injury

Family struggles with complex repercussions of a fall at work

by Tami Soltys



Tami with her sons Dave Jr (left) and Dan

It all began back on November 12, 2001. My husband Dave was working in construction. I was in Calgary, Alberta with my son Daniel, taking him to the hospital for his breathing problems, then I got the phone call. My husband told me that he had an accident at work.

Dave was installing siding with my brother Barrie. They had hired a crew to put in windows, and Dave stepped on a piece of gyprock left on the ground by the window crew. The gyprock had the first frost of the year on it, so it was very slippery. As he fell his hip popped out and his knee landed on his tool belt. Lying on the ground, he yelled to my brother to pop his hip back into place so that he could get up. Barrie, although hesitant to do it, followed Dave's instructions. Dave got up; they finished off the day's work; then went home.

The next morning Dave was unable to get out of bed without assistance. Barrie helped him up and took him to the doctor. They drained fluid off his knee, as it had swelled up. After weeks of doing this, with no progress, the whirlwind of specialists began.

Dave was sent to Calgary for an MRI; then Regina for testing; and ended up getting hospitalized there because they thought he had flesh-eating disease. The results of a biopsy came back negative. He

saw an orthopaedic surgeon who told him with physio, he would be fine. After seeing 17 specialists, no two could agree on what he had. WCB marked his accident down as a knee strain. In the end physiotherapy made things worse, as his leg was swelling so badly he could hardly walk on it. His ankle began to turn to the point where he was walking on his left ankle instead of the sole of his foot. A custom-made leg brace and shoes didn't help either. After three years of physio WCB told him to sit at home and collect his cheques because his leg was never going to get better.

This really bothered Dave as he was a workaholic. Depression set in; he felt useless, like a failure as a father and a husband. Our married life ended up having its ups and downs, but we stood by him, letting him know that he was still loved. In approximately 2005, Dave got a tiny scratch from a kitten, and his leg began to swell again, so we made another trip to the hospital. They diagnosed him with Pasteurella, a disease normally only found in animals, which he contracted because of his low immune system due to the accident. This was treated and he was sent back home.

After six months, Cellulitis began to form in Dave's left leg. He was given antibiotics and pain killers but the Cellulitis got worse and worse, and eventually spread to

his right leg. Dave had asked the doctor to remove his leg on multiple occasions with the answer "No, you're not sick enough." As time went by he continued to ask, as all he wanted was to go back to work and support his family.

In 2008, he received another answer when he asked about his leg being removed. Now they told him he was too sick, that if they cut his leg off at the knee, the infection would only spread. This made Dave even more depressed. Our marriage became a battleground. The boys were staying away from us because all we were doing was fighting. It was a mess.

In December 2009, we had a house fire. We lost everything. I had left for work that morning but Dave thought I was still asleep in bed. He fell asleep on the couch. The fire started in our bedroom from a short in the wiring. Some fireworks our son had bought were stored in there, and the fireworks going off woke Dave up. He opened the bedroom door and was met with a wall of flames. He was hollering for me, attempting to poke the bed with his cane to wake me up. He called upstairs to the boys, and got them outside. He then returned to the bedroom, thinking I was still there. After the police and firefighters arrived, he was told if he tried going back in again he would be arrested. He complied. While standing outside they all heard a squeal. Thinking it was me, Dave tried to get back in again. The squeal they heard was our 14-year-old dog, also Dave's best friend. Our youngest son noticed our van was missing, and they realized that I might not be in the house. I had been at work for 10 minutes when they called and I was devastated.

My boss drove me home, and on the way, the ambulance passed us with my husband and oldest son in it. I returned to what was left of my house, which was nothing but a fireball, with my two younger boys running out to see me. Later that day, we went to the hospital to check on Dave and Dan, both being treated for burns and smoke inhalation.

When Dave Sr. and Dave Jr. were released from the hospital we set up a couple rooms at the hotel where we stayed until the beginning of January, when we moved in with a family friend for a couple months.

Dave's health continued to deteriorate. He was spending more time in the hospital than he was at home. In January of 2011 I handed in my notice so I could take care of him at home. He could not bathe himself, or do any of the hygienic things, so he needed constant care.

He was falling more and more often, and each time we would have to call an ambulance to get him off the floor as his weight had gone from 200 pounds to 540 pounds. After multiple tests, they would treat him till he was feeling better then send him home, usually for two to three weeks at a time.

Then in February of 2013, he fell for the second time in 24 hours. When the ambulance came, this time at 4 a.m., they took him to emergency. I rode in the ambulance with him and they noticed that his breathing was labored and began doing tests for a heart attack; results negative.

In emergency, Dave was tired. He answered the doctor's questions to the best of his ability, and began drifting off to sleep. The emergency room doctor checked on him and his speech was slow but he was responsive. Half an hour later, when the vascular surgeon came in, Dave was totally unresponsive. They rushed him to trauma. After another 40 minutes, they called me into the trauma room, saying that they had intubated him, and he was now on life support. I broke down and realized what was happening.

Dave was moved to ICU, where he spent from February 3, 2013 to Easter Sunday. His health deteriorated even more. They had him on maximum life support at one point, and the doctors wanted me to make a decision; they met with me and our boys. I informed them that although Dave could not talk, he was alert and aware of his surroundings, so that he would have to make that decision; I couldn't make it for him. The next day, the doctor told him the facts. I asked Dave if he understood. He nodded his head yes. The doctor told him, "Dave, we have done everything we can. You are on maximum life support; there is nothing more we can do for you. Do you want to remain on life support for the rest of your life?" I asked him, "Do you understand what he said?" Dave nodded; then I asked him, "Do you want to stay on life support for as long as you need to?" He nodded his head; then I asked, "So you want to live?" He nodded his head again. The doctor said that was all he needed to hear and walked away.

Within two days, they began removing the life support machines, as Dave no longer needed them. He had the will to fight again. On Easter Sunday, he was moved to the Progressive Care Unit. He hadn't eaten for two and a half months. He was told if he could swallow, they would start to feed him food again. He passed this test with flying colors. He continued to improve there for a month then went to the regular ward for three weeks. Though going to dialysis now, he continued to fight. He was transferred to a Rehab Unit on May 23. Here they helped him with his walking and building his strength. He came home on June 19.

basket case. I didn't know if I was coming or going, which way was up or what I was going to do.

At the end of February Dave's brother died from a massive heart attack. Dave was really bothered by this as he was just starting to get to know his family again. A week later the doctor informed me that they were having trouble keeping the fluid off, so his dialysis increased to four times a week for seven hours each time. On March 12, 2014, Dr. Stryker approached me again and mentioned that if they didn't get the fluid off him it was going to kill him. Two days later he died at home after a dialysis treatment where they found an infection in his line.

“ After he was home for four months Dave fell again and spent another month in the hospital. The cycle continued. I was drained after caring for him for so long only to end up back where we started.

After he was home for four months Dave fell again and spent another month in the hospital. The cycle continued. I was drained after caring for him for so long only to end up back where we started. I was becoming a wreck. He came home again and we continued with our daily life – him sleeping and watching TV in his chair, doing all that he could from there – and me taking care of him, bathing him, cleaning him up after him, plus our trips to dialysis. He was placed on blood thinners to dissolve clots forming in his legs and arms. So now we had to do blood tests as well. Dave was paranoid of needles. I was becoming a

He went to sleep and never woke up.

The next day I contacted WCB and informed them what had happened and they put me in touch with Threads of Life. This I will never forget. The volunteers with Threads of Life were there for me if I had questions and helped me through the rough times. My boys and I were invited to a family forum in October of 2014 where we met others who were going through the same emotional upheaval that we were. It was such a comfort knowing that we were not alone and that if we had problems dealing with issues we had someone to turn to.

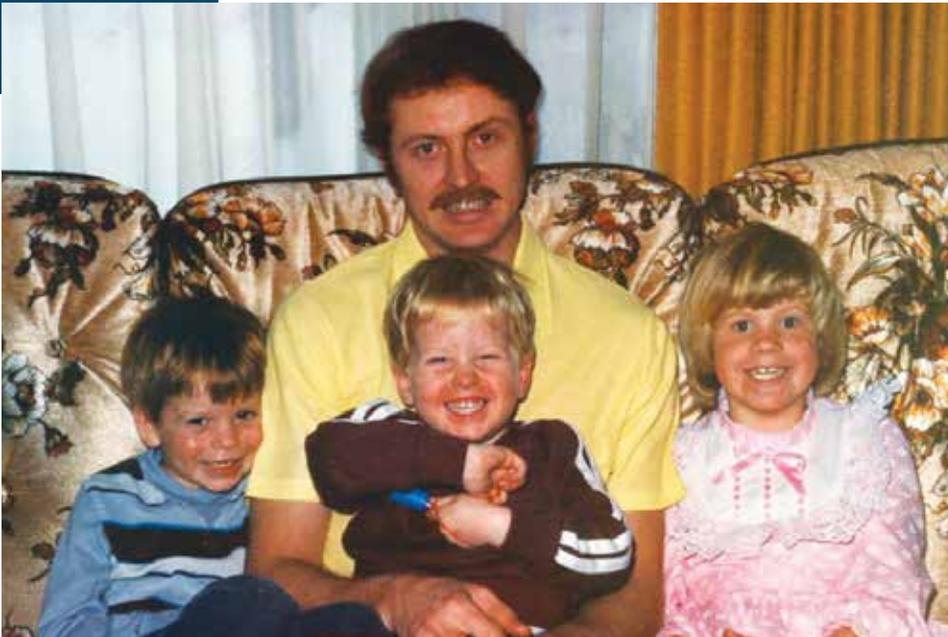


Dave with his sisters

Being honest with myself

Healing from two workplace tragedies, step by step

by Samantha Montreuil



Samantha at right with her dad and two brothers

Every day I get up,

stretch and drive to work. What do I do? I am an Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator/Specialist. What does that mean? I protect the company I work for from liabilities associated with health and safety, but my main job is to make sure all workers go home safe to their families each day.

I started my working career as a labourer, trying my hand at many things, from working in a casting shop, to line work, to creating wire harness and ended up working the majority of this time as a composite technician, creating the bodies of helicopters. This was until I wore out my hand and my arm up to my shoulder, and developed a life-long disease called Des Quervain's Disease. It is a repetitive strain injury which affects the thumb area, but while over-compensating for this, I damaged my right shoulder. I do not look disabled. I have all my limbs, and I do not hobble around, or moan about my daily pain and struggle. But at the end of the day, when I take time to myself, I feel aches and pain and think back about how this started my new journey.

As a result of my injury, and the inability to fully recover, I was discharged from my employer and sent back to school, with two small kids at home. They were two and

four back then. At the time I wondered:

1. What the heck was I thinking?
2. Can I do this?

But I did my best with the love and support of my family and my husband. I was enrolled in a three-year program at Niagara College, Human Resources Management. I was excelling, and getting grades that I'd never imagined. I felt like a kid again, bringing my tests and assignments home and showing my dad and mom for their acceptance. That is all I wanted. I wanted them to be proud of me, as I vowed to finish what I started. In my past, I didn't always do this. I would build walls and roads, and avoided finishing what I started.

“ I screamed out loud and fell to the floor in front of my four and six year old children. I could not keep it together. I was paralyzed.

Life was going well. I had adjusted and was starting the winter term of my second year, when life decided to change the game.

January 20th, 2009, the day was sunny, bitter cold, and there was ice and snow on the ground. I was feeling off, and decided to go pick up my kids from my mom's house, and go home. Today was the day, I decided, I would cook a beef roast for

supper. I had never been very successful with this, but today I decided I wanted to make a roast. (I would avoid it for five years after that day.) The roast was cooking in the oven. My kids were off playing. I had just settled with a cup of coffee and my laptop, when the phone rang. It was my husband Bill's work, they said the police were looking for my husband. I got off the phone and started to call his cell – no answer – then my mom – no answer – and his parents – no answer – then his work. His boss said Bill just got up from his desk and left and he didn't know where. I kept calling and calling. I was panicked and severe anxiety set it.

After what seemed forever, my husband called and said to pack the kids an overnight bag; he was coming to get us, as something very bad had happened. I asked what, but at first he couldn't tell me. I begged for an answer. I asked if it was my brother Steven. He said no, Steven is fine. I asked about my grandad, as he was not in good health. He said no it was not my grandad. He finally told me that my dad had been in a very bad accident at work. I screamed into the phone 'Dad's dead!' In a little voice questioning myself I said, "Is he dead?" My husband replied yes and that he would be home soon. I screamed out loud and fell to the floor in front of my four and six year old children. I could not keep it together. I was paralyzed. Again it seemed that Bill was gone for hours. Later on I found out, my strong husband was the first one to get to my mom. He held her like a child as she just cried. The OPP would

not let him leave my mom until Victim Services arrived and he was calm to drive.

When Bill found me, I was sitting on the living room floor, hugging Rachel, my daughter. He packed the kids' bags and we all ventured to my mother's house, where he would then drive to his parent's house. The kids were going to be there for a bit. It was the longest drive from Fort Erie, ON

to Niagara Falls, ON to my parents' house. When we got there, my mom was pure white, and Victim Services was there trying to console us. I remember being very angry. My mom was devastated, but did not want to call anyone. So, I began to call one family member after the other. I had to call my two brothers Scott and Steven. We did not have any details – just that he had died at work, due to a workplace accident with a fork lift. I blanked out most of this time, but I do remember having the local paper call and doing an interview.

company pleaded guilty to not providing signs, signals or barriers for the protection of the worker. They were fined \$120,000 plus a 25 per cent victim's surcharge. They are now out of business in Canada.

Those next days, months and now years are a blur. I had forgotten about myself, while taking care of others and trying to become a martyr in the health and safety world, which later I found just lengthened my grieving process. I would tell thousands of people that I am the daughter of my father, who died in a workplace tragedy, but

time, and even as I climb out of this – and there has been some sliding backwards, back to that easy place – I have come to understand that I am Samantha, just a person, and not my past. I have come to realize I am not perfect, and in time, I hope to move forward with no regrets or guilt.

Through it all, I did finish my second year in Human Resources Management. I also wrote a new proposal and met with my WSIB case manager for a change in schooling. I felt at that time, I needed to change my scope to a different branch of

“ I would tell thousands of people that I am the daughter of my father, who died in a workplace tragedy, but I forgot to mention that I am also a person, living with a life-altering injury, and trying to cope with my grief too.

Several hours later, the operations manager from my dad's company came to drop off my dad's SUV. The manager was so very sorry, and could only tell us that dad was run over by a front end loader as he came out of an overhead door. He died quickly due to his internal injuries. In the next few days came the planning of the funeral. I wrote a eulogy and spoke to a standing-room-only crowd. I do not remember what I said.

My dad, Ken Frazer, was 54 years old when he passed away at work. He was the eldest of three children who were all adopted by my grandparents Jack and Grace Frazer. He was nine years old when he was adopted. He followed in the steps of my granddad Jack, by becoming an industrial electrician. He worked most of his 30-plus years in the steel industry in the maintenance department. I was the eldest child. My dad worked a lot, he always said 'to keep the wolf away from the door'. As a child, I remember him not being around much. When he was home he spent a lot of his extra time with my brothers, coaching their sports. I honestly did not have a lot in common with him. I was not the athlete he wanted me to be; I was not into sports watching. I was his girl, Sambo, and he loved me and we could always just talk about anything. I always wanted to marry someone just like my dad, and I always told him so. I feel in many ways I did. When he died, I vowed to honor him by moving into a career in occupational health and safety, and to have him never forgotten. I attended all the court proceedings in the next year and a bit. Finally, in August 2010, the

I forgot to mention that I am also a person, living with a life-altering injury, and trying to cope with my grief too. I became destructive in my life. I wanted to forget everything and everyone. I began doing things that were not in my nature, trying to find a new me, a new reality, and forgetting my past. I disassociated myself from all my close friends and family, I began to drink more frequently in my spare time and I had an emotional fantasy affair. I could not see my destructive behavior, and no one called me out on it right away. It wasn't until I was caught, in the peak of my affair, that I finally started to see again, and the fog started to lift. I am healing, and six years later, I am finally starting to deal with all those deep-down issues. It will take time, one step at a

human resources: occupational health and safety. It was agreed upon, and I was allowed to continue my education at Ryerson University. I met several wonderful people along my way, who guided me into my profession in health and safety. I currently work for a great company, and I enjoy who I work with. I am in the field so I get to see and learn every day.

Even though I am still not sure where I want to be in this profession, my mission will always be the same: to change health and safety, so that all workers go home to their families at the end of the day, and never have to live or witness what my family has gone through and continues to go through.



2008 was the last Christmas Samantha's family had with Ken

We rise AGAIN!

by Shirley Hickman



Rise Again! Words that have been set to music. The other week, the words were echoing in my head and I wondered why. I often get those kinds of days – find myself going for a walk and all of sudden a song starts to come into my head – and I find myself singing along, sometimes in my head and sometimes out loud. When I was working in a nursing home many years ago, the residents would say, “we knew it was you coming down the hall.” Brave souls they were and shared that they would take enjoyment from my singing, even though I often had to fill in the words myself and certainly don’t know the notes – just sing along a tune.

There were days or perhaps months after Tim died, that I didn’t know or think if I would ever sing again, from the heart or the head. Little by little, like the other steps I took, one day I heard myself.

Now, in the early fall of 2015, the song in my head was ‘We Rise Again’ as sung by Aselin Debison as the Young Worker LifeQuilt was being unveiled for the first time in May 2003. A young teenager at the time, she was moved to tears by the faces of the quilt. “We Rise Again, in the faces...” so appropriate to go with this quilt. The song was performed by the Rankin Family and other well-known artists, but it was Aselin’s voice I was hearing.

So I wondered, why today and then for a few days more and reflected how the lyrics are like the lives of so many of you and my own. I have had the privilege to meet and talk with so many Canadian family members. We were faced with the unthinkable and somehow managed to find a way to stand up, and over time to rise up again. When faced with the challenges of a life-altering injury, occupational disease or outcome of fatal injuries we find ourselves in a storm where the waves just keep knocking us down. We try to surface for air, but for a long time, we keep getting overcome by the waves of tears, frustrations, legal or medical systems we are totally unprepared for. We look to others, perhaps the Volunteer Family Guides to help us find a ray of light, the wind to rustle the leaves, to help us find a new meaning, to help us on our path through the forest.

Now, early November, Threads of Life has held the family forums for 2015. I along with many of the staff members of Threads of Life have had the privilege to be a small piece of your very personal journey. You have shared the waves with each other,

We Rise Again

When the waves roll on over the waters
And the ocean cries
We look to our sons and daughters
To explain our lives
As if a child could tell us why
That as sure as the sunrise
As sure as the sea
As sure as the wind in the trees

We rise again in the faces of our children
We rise again in the voices of our song
We rise again in the waves out on the ocean
And then we rise again

When the light goes dark with the forces of creation
Across a stormy sky
We look to reincarnation to explain our lives
As if a child could tell us why
That as sure as the sunrise
As sure as the sea
As sure as the wind in the trees

We rise again in the faces of our children
We rise again in the voices of our song
We rise again in the waves out on the ocean
And then we rise again

We rise again in the faces of our children
We rise again in the voices of our song
We rise again in the waves out on the ocean
And then we rise again

(Leon Dubinsky, 1985)

some of you have found voice, hopefully all of you have found a coping skill to help you rise again when the waves of emotion, sadness or joy come your way. Waves of joy, happiness, sadness and thankfulness often come one after the other and sometimes we feel they come together. We have learned to weather the storm and together are willing to help the next person try to come to some kind of understanding of the storm.

I encourage you to share with others through our blog, what music and songs mean to you in your journey. A particular song of encouragement, perhaps a song of remembrance of a life the way it was, a person who is no longer physically with you? Sharing is one value of Threads of Life and I hope you all find a way to share your experiences with others.

Reinvesting in life after a loss

Over the year, Threads newsletter has explored the model of grieving developed by psychologist William Worden. He divided grieving and mourning into four tasks – but it's important to note that these tasks aren't necessarily ordered steps, and any individual may move in and out of different tasks or experience some at the same time. Worden at first referred to his fourth task as “reinvesting in life after the loss” but later changed this title to “finding an enduring connection with the deceased in the midst of embarking on a new life.”

“The fourth task of mourning,” Worden writes, “is to find a place for the deceased that will enable the mourner to be connected with the deceased but in a way that will not preclude him or her from going on with life. We need to find ways to memorialize; that is, to remember dead loved ones – keeping them with us but still going on with life.”

Writer Litsa Williams, in her blog *What's Your Grief*, notes “The gist of task four is this – to find an appropriate, ongoing connection in our emotional lives with the person who has died, while allowing us to continue living. Like the other tasks, this can mean varying things to various griever. But it often means allowing for thoughts and memories, while beginning to meaningfully engage in things that bring pleasure, new things, or new relationships. For Worden, not accomplishing this task is to not live. It is the sense that life stopped when that person died and that one is not able to resume life in a meaningful way, with a different sense of connection to the person who has died. This last task can take a long time and be one of the most difficult to accomplish.”

Threads of Life's Resource Manual for Volunteer Family Guides outlines each of Worden's four tasks. According to the manual:

The task of reinvesting in life after the loss is being worked on when:

- The grieving person makes commitments to new activities (e.g. joining a gym, signing up for a course, learning



Photo by Tom Buchanan, Tom Buchanan Photographics

Family forums are a chance to remember, while building new skills and new relationships.

- to cook)
- The grieving person or injured or ill worker shows a commitment to his or her self-care (e.g. eating properly, giving up destructive or negative behaviours, looking for help and support)
- The grieving person or injured or ill worker starts to reconnect to old, important relationships (e.g. a spouse, children, old friends) or to build and invest in new relationships
- The grieving person begins to see some strength, purpose or meaning in his or her survival of this tragic loss, or
- The injured or ill worker finds meaning and worth in his or her current life.

Reinvesting in life after the loss leads grieving survivors and injured or ill workers to create a new world with new beliefs and ideas. These new beliefs and ideas incorporate their significant loss and help them adjust to their new reality.

And then there were four!

Family Forums help point the way for many Threads of Life families on their healing journey. In 2016, for the first time there will be four family forums across the country, taking place in Nova Scotia, Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Since 2008 there have been three forums per year. The fourth event has been added to ensure that each forum remains a manageable size, with enough space for new families and for participants to get to know one another.

As the number of Threads of Life family members increases – just two years ago there were roughly 1,700 family members, and today there are more than 2,200 – the organization continues to build its solid foundation and ensure it can meet the needs of each new family that comes looking for support.



Photo by Tom Buchanan, Tom Buchanan Photographics

Graham Murray shares his story at this year's Western Canada forum

Laura Synyard

In 2006 Laura Synyard and her husband Keith moved their young family from Alberta to her husband's home province of Newfoundland. Four short years later Laura found herself presented with the opportunity to volunteer with the inaugural St. John's Steps for Life walk.

Laura was studying health and safety when Threads of Life board member and St. John's walk chair Jackie Manuel came to address the class. Jackie was looking for volunteers and Laura was just the person Jackie was looking for. Laura was particularly touched by Shirley Hickman's story about the workplace death of her son Tim. Laura, a mom herself, was struck by the strength and determination it must have taken for Shirley to take her family's tragedy and create an organization of support for others and prevention of further tragedies.

"As a health and safety professional it's my job to prevent workplace tragedies but as a mom the organization just hit home with me," Laura says. Laura is the mother of three children: Kris is 20, Carly is 19, and Chad is 14. Laura's children all help out with the walk as their schedules allow.

After that first walk in St. John's in 2010 Laura was hooked. She has been an active committee member ever since and is looking forward to the 2016 walk. As a lifelong volunteer, she has learned that you don't need money to make a difference. Often your time is much more valuable to people, and people often just need to know that someone cares.

Laura's family has recently experienced a tragic loss: her brother-in-law died following a brain stem stroke. Although not a work-related injury it was a tragedy for the family none the less. Laura says they knew what happened to her brother-in-law and why. It reminded her how awful it must be for families whose loved one is injured, killed or made ill in a workplace tragedy, when they have to wait months or years to find out what happened, if ever. Laura is comforted by the knowledge that Newfoundland families are finding the support they need thanks



Laura Synyard, left, with Steps for Life committee colleague Dayne Biggin

in part to the hard work of the St. John's walk committee.

Laura has recently expanded her volunteer activities with Threads of Life. Along with her St. John's walk committee cohort Dayne Biggin, Laura staffed a trade show booth at the 2015 Newfoundland & Labrador Construction Safety Association Safety Conference this past March. Laura is a true ambassador for Threads of Life.

Volunteer Awards 2015



Dennis MacDonald (left) with board chairman Bill Stunt

Threads of Life relies on the many volunteers and organizations that help us deliver services, raise funds and spread the word. We wouldn't exist without you! Each year, we select a few to be recognized with volunteer awards. There are so many to choose from! These are individuals and groups who have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to Threads of Life and our work. For 2015, we have recognized:

Board member:
Dennis MacDonald

Partner:
Vale

Friends of Threads of Life:
Whitney Allen of the Alberta Construction Safety Association, Ellis Don

Program Advancement in Family Support:
Karen Lapierre Pitts

Program Advancement in Partnerships:
Unifor

Program Advancement in Community Action:
Diana Devine, Dave Stedman

To learn more about the contributions of each of our award recipients, visit the Threads of Life blog, www.threadsoflife.ca/blog



Make it a date!

Get out your calendar and make a note to come walk in your local Steps for Life next spring. Steps for Life – Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy events are scheduled each year to mark the opening of North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) week, the first week of May. For 2016, that means most walks will take place Saturday, April 30 or Sunday, May 1, 2016, with a few locations on alternate dates. Registration will open February 1 – watch the walk web site for more details! www.stepsforlife.ca.

Five ways you can help

Steps for Life is the major fundraiser for Threads of Life – all the money raised through the walk is used to provide services to families coping with the effects of workplace fatalities, life-altering injuries or occupational disease. Want to chip in? Here's how:

- 1. Walk** It's inspiring to see that sea of yellow t-shirts across Canada every year! Find your local walk, come out on walk day and join the national Steps for Life movement.
- 2. FUNdraise** If you're planning to walk –and even if you're not – you can make your involvement more meaningful by raising money to support Threads of Life families. We have great online tools, and tips for fundraising in your workplace and community.
- 3. Sponsor** Community and national sponsors make a huge contribution to Steps for Life's success. Suggest to your employers that they become a Steps for Life sponsor –it's a great way to show a commitment to health and safety.
- 4. Volunteer** Steps for Life is volunteer-powered! You can help your local committee plan the walk from scratch, or come out on walk day to hand out t-shirts, direct traffic or take photos. There's a role for everyone!
- 5. Spread the word** Let others know about Steps for Life. Share our Facebook or Twitter posts; put up a poster or have a



From serving cake to painting faces, there's a volunteer role for everyone

conversation. Let's get the whole country on board!

For more information on how you can get involved in Steps for Life, visit www.stepsforlife.ca or call Threads of Life at 888-567-9490.



More and more, companies are looking for ways to take safety to a new level; to get employees engaged and to demonstrate their commitment to the community. And more and more

companies are turning to the Steps for Life Corporate Challenge to help achieve those goals.

The Corporate Challenge is a just-for-fun competition within the annual Steps for Life walk. Companies form a team of three to ten people willing to participate in their local walk and do some fundraising. The top fundraising team in Canada wins a prize, along with the top team from each region of the country. The

Step up to the challenge

competition's progress is tracked week by week on the Steps for Life web site.

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. The team commits to raising at least \$100 per team member, in addition to the \$10 registration fee. But many teams raise much more – last year's national and regional Corporate Challenge winners each raised thousands to help families affected by workplace tragedy.

Is your company ready for a Corporate Challenge? It's easy to register online at www.stepsforlife.ca. You'll find lots of tips and fundraising tools to help you get started. If you need more information, call us toll-free at toll free at 1-888-567-9490 or email steps@threadsoflife.ca.



OPCA members put Threads of Life in the ‘fore’ front

The second annual golf tournament for the Ontario Petroleum Contractors Association drew 65 golfers to the Nottawasaga Resort in Alliston this fall. OPCA’s members, suppliers and friends and family raised \$7,740 for Threads of Life. Thank you to all the sponsors and participants for their generosity!

The RedOPCA President Gord Thompson (left) and Henry Gruyters of Tervita present Threads of Life volunteer Johanna Leroux with a cheque for the proceeds from the annual golf tournament

A new purpose for your old **clunker**

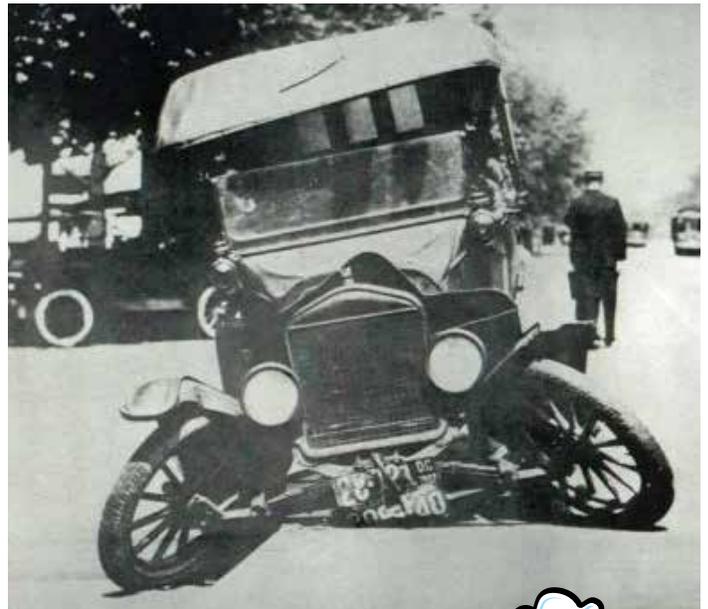
It served you long and well – road trips, drive-throughs, the daily commute – and now your old car has reached the end of its road. But maybe there’s one last service that cherished vehicle can provide. Through an arrangement between Threads of Life and the organization Car Heaven, you can donate your old car or van for recycling, and donate the proceeds to help families affected by workplace tragedy.

Shirley and Bob Hickman found the service when planning their move from Ontario to B.C. They didn’t want to take their older van, but didn’t think it held much value for re-sale. Instead they were able to donate it.

Car Heaven (www.carheaven.ca) works with Canadian auto recyclers. When a vehicle is donated, the fluids are drained, and then the car is dismantled. Parts and components are reconditioned and sold for re-use where possible. Metals, rubber and other materials are recycled or sold for scrap. The donor receives a tax receipt, and the charity receives the value of the materials from the recycler.

To be donated, a vehicle must be complete, with its original registration and keys, but it doesn’t have to be running. In most major communities, Car Heaven will arrange to have a tow truck come and haul the car away for its new incarnation.

To participate, go to the Car Heaven web site at www.carheaven.ca or call 1-877-755-6272. Don’t forget to identify Threads of Life as your charity of choice.



Give a gift of hope to grieving families

Holiday season can be a really hard time for families affected by workplace tragedy – dealing with occupational disease, coping with a serious injury, supporting an injured family member, or missing and absent loved one. Threads of Life services are needed more than ever.

It's a perfect time of year to remember and support grieving families by making a donation to Threads of Life. Here are a few ways you could show your concern and help build a network of hope:

- **Give a lasting gift**– Does your friend or family member really need more “stuff” this holiday season? Why not give a gift to Threads of Life in lieu of that book or pair of socks? We'll send a card to let them know you've donated.
- **Recognize your employees** – Has your business had a good year? What better way to show your appreciation to your staff than a donation to Threads of Life on their behalf?
- **Mark a milestone** – A gift to Threads of Life is a great way to mark an injury-free milestone or new safety program. We can assist with a card, letter or certificate to profile your commitment.
- **Just show you care** – If you're reading this newsletter, you likely realize the value of the programs Threads of Life offers for families. Help us reach out to even more families. Donate just because you care.

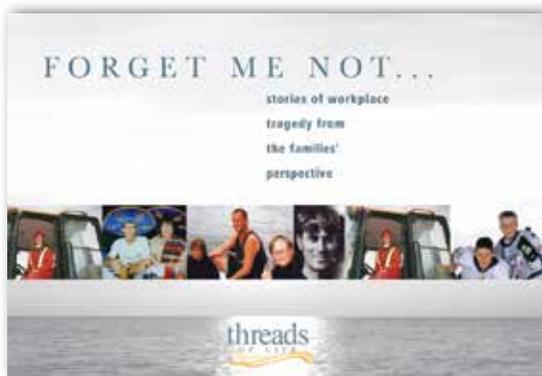
It's easy to make your contribution. Just go to the Threads of Life web site (www.threadsoflife.ca/donate) and use our secure online form, or call us at 1-888-567-9490 to use your credit card over the phone.

Send a message of hope! Once you've made your donation, email us your message of support for Threads of Life families, and we will send it out through Facebook and Twitter!



The BC chapter of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters displayed the LifeQuilt at their Hall of Fame reception this fall, and donated the proceeds from their charity auction to Threads of Life – a total of \$1000. Thanks to all the CME members.

Don't forget...to work safely



Forget Me Not tells the stories of lives changed forever when a loved one was traumatically injured at work, diagnosed with an occupational disease or fatally injured. You and your employees won't be able to forget these powerful and moving stories. Safety matters — and this book highlights all the reasons why.

Use stories from Forget Me Not to set the stage for training, or hand them out to new hires during orientation. All proceeds go directly to Threads of Life support programs and services for families of workplace tragedy.

To order, visit www.threadsoflife.ca/for-families/our-new-book-forget-me-not/ or call 1-888-567-9490

Coming Events

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

New Speaker Training

January 28-31, 2016
Mississauga, ON

For more information contact Susan Haldane, shaldane@threadsoflife.ca

Volunteer Family Guide Training

February 25-March 1, 2016
Barrie, ON

For more information contact Kate Kennington, kkennington@threadsoflife.ca

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.

How to reach us

Toll-free: 1-888-567-9490
Fax: 1-519-685-1104

Association for Workplace Tragedy
Family Support - Threads of Life

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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.



Yes I will, help bring hope and healing to families

Gift Payment Options

- I'd like to make monthly gifts
 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$ _____
- I'd prefer to make a one-time gift
 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$ _____
- I've enclosed a void cheque to start direct withdrawal for monthly giving
- You may also donate to Threads of Life online at www.threadsoflife.ca/donate
- Please send me updates about Threads of Life events via email at: _____

Visa MasterCard

_____ account number _____ expiry

NAME ON CARD _____

SIGNATURE _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

ADDRESS (for income tax receipt) _____

Threads of Life, P.O. Box 9066 • 1795 Ernest Ave • London, ON N6E 2V0 1 888 567 9490 • www.threadsoflife.ca

All donations are tax deductible. Charitable Registration Number #87524 8908 RR0001