

# 2014

annual  
report

threads  
OF LIFE



2000+  
family  
members

# Chairman's message

**BILL STUNT**



We've all been there: every family member was once the "new family," coming to Threads of Life nervous and hesitant; finding understanding, friendship and even hope. Nevin DiJulio, from Prince Edward Island, captures the new family experience in this report. Nevin and his family were among the 240 new family members who came to Threads of Life in 2014. The organization now serves more than 2,000 family members across the country.

As word about Threads of Life spreads, our outreach continues to grow. This growth poses challenges for the organization, ensuring that we can continue to meet the needs of our family members as well as our corporate clients and partners. In 2014, for example, all three of our family forums were at their maximum attendance.

Our philosophy for Threads of Life has always been to take baby steps and ensure a solid foundation on which to build. In response to our growth, and after much discussion, Threads of Life opened an office in London in 2014, and created new staff positions to help with administration and promote the LifeQuilt.

The journey of a new family member to Threads of Life often includes volunteering, whether as a family guide, speaker, Steps for Life organizer, fundraiser or general go-to person. We are so fortunate to benefit from the commitment and passion of our members and partners – you make it possible for us to accomplish as much as we do.

This annual report is an opportunity to thank all those who contribute to Threads of Life's important work – our volunteers, our funders, our partners, our staff, and my fellow board members. On behalf of all those hesitant and fearful new families, thank you. It is gratifying to know that we are helping so many people, even though we all wish Threads of Life wasn't needed. Nevin Di Julio speaks for all of us: "It's unfortunate that Threads of Life is needed," he says, "but it's a good thing it's there."

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS (as of December 31, 2014)

**Bill Stunt, Chair**

Production Manager, *CBC Radio Network*  
Family Member, Ontario

**Dennis MacDonald, Vice-Chair**

General Manager, *GTA Service Centre*  
*Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO)*

**Jackie Manuel, Secretary**

Chief Executive Officer  
*Newfoundland and Labrador Construction*  
*Safety Association*

**Eleanor Westwood, Treasurer**

Communications Manager (*retired*),  
*Canadian Center for Occupational Health*  
*and Safety (CCOHS)*

**Peter Deines**

VP Sales and Marketing  
*CannAmm Occupational Testing Services*

**Lynda Kolly**

Postmaster, *Canada Post Corporation*  
Family Member, Manitoba

**Wally Power**

Retired  
Family Member, Nova Scotia

**Shelley Rowan**

Vice-President, Prevention and Service Delivery  
*Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia*

**Jim Sandford**

Foreman & Elevator Mechanic  
*International Union of Elevator Constructors*  
Family Member, Ontario

**Shirley Hickman, Ex-officio Member**

Executive Director  
*Threads of Life*



Left to right - **BACK:** Jim Sandford, Peter Deines, Dennis MacDonald, Bill Stunt, Shelley Rowan - **FRONT:** Lynda Kolly, Eleanor Westwood, Jackie Manuel, Wally Power

# From doubt to healing

## A new family's journey with Threads of Life



The drive from Lennox Island PEI to Chester NS is a long one – long enough for Nevin Di Julio to have second thoughts, and third and fourth ones, about where he was headed. Loaded into the car with his wife, his mother and his teenaged son, Nevin was en route to his first Threads of Life Family Forum, the Atlantic Canada forum in May 2014.

“I was apprehensive going,” Nevin says, “but I haven’t regretted it.”

The Di Julios were among roughly 240 family members who came to Threads of Life in 2014, bringing the total to more than 2,000 family members currently being served through our programs. Nevin was burned in a spill of 380-degree (F) oil at the French fry plant where he was working in June 2011. Through many long months of surgeries, infections, medications and therapies his physical healing proceeded, but emotional injuries were a different question.

“These injuries and the pain and suffering associated with them, I wouldn’t wish on anyone,” he says. “The physical toll was great. The emotional toll was greater and more persistent. I tried to put on a brave face for my family. I’m not supposed to be a source of pain to my family. I’m supposed to protect them from pain.”

“Emotional wounds and physical wounds are different in the fact that physical wounds are treated following standardized procedures. Physical wounds will progressively heal. Emotional healing takes longer.”

Nevin learned about Threads of Life and the family forum through a worker at the PEI Workers Compensation Board (WCB). He wasn’t sure it was for him, so after mulling it over for a few weeks, he talked to his psychologist, family members and others he trusted. Finally he picked up the phone and talked to Kate Kennington, the manager for family support. Kate told him he was welcome, and he would find others who understood what he was going through.

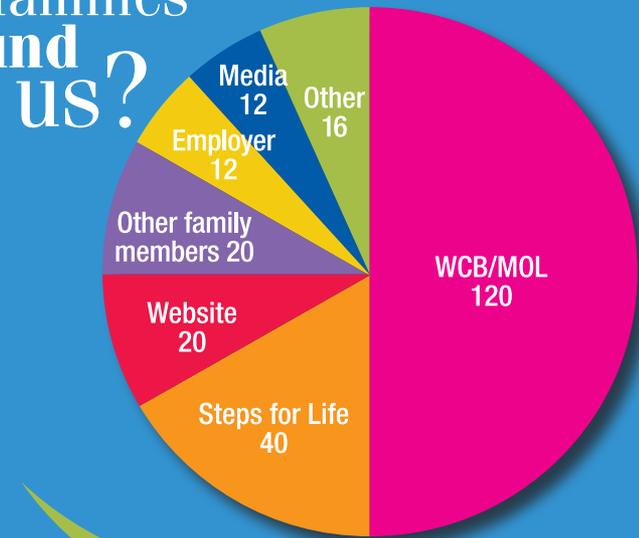
Despite his doubts on that 400-km drive, Nevin found the promises came true.

“The Family Forum was eye-opening. Sadly, it was comforting because you realize you’re not the only one going through what you’re going through.”

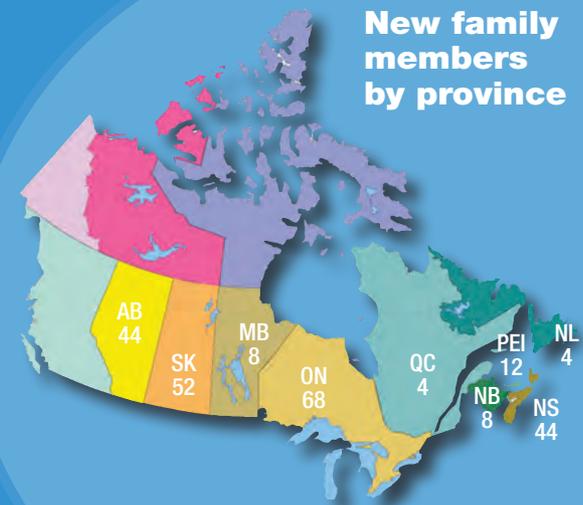
“There’s that little thread that everybody can relate to,” he says. That common experience links family members despite differences in their lives and stories. “It’s one little thread, but it seems to be made of solid steel.”

Most new families find Threads of Life through their provincial compensation board or labour ministry – see the graph right. Threads of Life never directly contacts a newly-grieving or affected family since they will have enough to deal with already. Once a family contacts Threads of Life, our manager for family support follows up. Depending on their needs, they may be paired with a Volunteer Family Guide, provided with information resources about investigations and legal processes, and invited to a family forum. New family members are also added to Threads of Life mail lists to receive Threads newsletter and other information about the organization and events.

## How did new families find us?



## New family members by province



# Volunteer Family Guides



More Threads of Life partners and volunteers understand the impact of workplace tragedy after attending a Family Forum reflections ceremony.

## **More capacity to help ...thanks to you**

The widow suddenly alone in an empty house; the sister who can't walk away from her brother's gravesite; the husband and father who can no longer work to support his family – all were able to find comfort and hope through Threads of Life's Volunteer Family Guide program last year. Family Guides are trained volunteers who have been through a workplace tragedy. They offer a listening ear, and a shoulder to lean on for people newly coping with a fatality, serious injury or occupational illness. Because of you, our committed volunteers and donors, Threads of Life continues to offer comfort to those struggling with grief and change.

## **Comments**

*"An excellent program, unique and so helpful to talk with another who has gone through the same thing. Knowing others have survived the experience is comforting."*

*"Beyond valuable. Helped us every step of the way through every process."*

*"She was very supportive when I needed it most."*

- **6 new family guides trained in 2014**
- **25 completed advanced training**

# Family Forums



Nevin Di Julio with his family

## **Families find honesty and understanding ...with your support**

Like the Di Julios, they arrive feeling nervous and alone. And they leave with new friends, reassured they are not alone in their struggles with grief and healing. On his family's drive home after their first Family Forum in 2014, Nevin Di Julio says, "I had the distinct impression everybody felt a lot lighter." His family – who thought they were going just to support Nevin – also found themselves opening up and sharing their experience with others. "We were all able to be honest, and people understood," he says. "You don't get that as often as you need it." Since the Forum, Nevin and his 17-year-old son have been able to talk much more about his injury and the impact it has had on all of them. Funding from key sponsors, fundraising through events and corporate partners, and the work of committed volunteers allows this change to happen for the Di Julios and more than 300 others who attended family forums in 2014.

- **315 family and friends attended Family Forums in 2014**
- **71 were family members attending for the first time**

# Outreach and prevention

## Safer workplaces tomorrow ...made possible by you

It may take years, or it may only be days, but many Threads of Life family members find in their hearts a powerful need to make change – to prevent workplace injuries and illnesses from hurting others; to honour their lives and the lives of their loved ones. Through our Speakers Bureau, the Steps for Life walk and other channels, they are making this happen. And across the country, workers and employers are listening to their stories and walking with them. Thank you for helping us change the world!

**93** speaker presentations in 2014

*“Too often we focus on the effect that an injury has on the company, without remembering the effect on the families involved. This goes for the effect on the supervisors and coworkers as well. I have never seen all of our supervisors devoting 100% attention to a speaker. All eyes were forward, no chit chat, completely attentive to what the speaker was saying.”*

*“I liked how honest [the speaker] was... He didn't try and sugar coat what happened to his son. I like how he made everyone feel that this could have happened to anyone. He truly hit home and I feel he touched everyone in that room.”*

*“We had numerous students attend her presentation. They were able to hear from someone their age what the impact can be if we don't work safely. It was great to have someone new tell them this instead of us as their employer always reminding them to work safely.”*

### Life stories and life promises

In some ways the LifeQuilt – a huge tapestry that captures the stories of young Canadians injured or killed on the job – started it all. And in 2014 the quilt gained new life and new reach through a web site that records all the original LifeQuilt stories and allows people to add their own. The stories are searchable, so they can be used by safety professionals and trainers. There's also an opportunity for anyone to post their safe work promise online.

Visit [www.lifequilt.ca](http://www.lifequilt.ca).



# Steps for Life

**Walking for safety ...with you leading the way**

Business leaders and politicians walking side-by-side with family members; managers with workers; kids with adults – that’s what it takes to change safety culture, and that’s what Steps for Life looks like. The 2014 version of Steps for Life – Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy took place in 35 communities in nine provinces, raising the most funds ever – more than \$650,000 to support Threads of Life’s programs for families coping with workplace fatalities, life-altering injuries and disease.

It’s all thanks to you, our amazing sponsors and volunteers, who give your time, energy and ideas to make the walk happen. Leaders from almost every walk committee attended best practices meetings this year to learn more about Threads of Life and share their ideas about how to make every walk a success.

**35**  
communities  
**9**  
provinces  
**\$650,000**



**STEPS  
FOR LIFE**

WALKING FOR FAMILIES  
OF WORKPLACE TRAGEDY



# Partners and fundraising

## *Grants and Partnerships*

We are extremely grateful for the support of our network of friends and supporters, which includes government departments, agencies, associations and corporations. These many partners provide financial support, spread the word about Threads of Life programs and services, and inspire us to keep going!

- Canadian Society of Safety Engineering
- Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail du Québec
- Canadian Occupational Safety magazine
- Manitoba Family Services and Labour Department
- Ontario Ministry of Labour
- Ontario Compensation Employees Union/CUPE 1750
- Osler, Hoskin and Harcourt LLP
- Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia
- Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board
- WorkSafeNB

grants  
up **7.5%**

fundraising  
up **16%**



# Summary of financial statements

*audited financial  
information  
upon request*

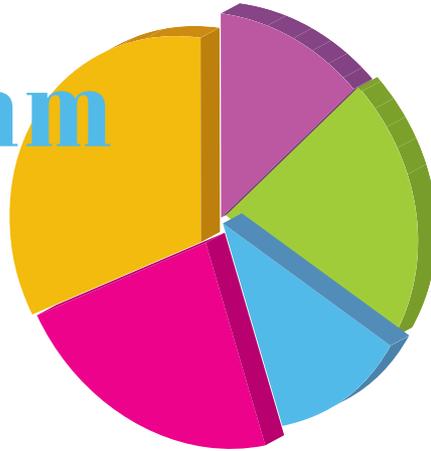
	2014 Totals	2013 Totals
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>	\$	\$
Cash & Marketable Securities	936,350	740,140
Accounts Receivable	65,514	75,649
Grants Receivable	23,580	23,580
GST/HST Recoverable	34,974	26,438
Prepays & Deposits	13,024	18,711
	<u>1,073,442</u>	<u>884,518</u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts Payable	49,637	49,825
Deferred Revenue	70,500	22,722
	<u>120,137</u>	<u>72,547</u>
<b>FUND BALANCES</b>		
LifeQuilt Fund	5,855	12,176
Unrestricted Operating Reserves	947,450	799,795
	<u>1,073,442</u>	<u>884,518</u>

	2014 Hard Costs	2014 Inkind	2014 Totals	2013 Totals
<b>REVENUES</b>	\$	\$	\$	\$
Grants & Awards	346,022	0	346,022	346,978
Fundraising	1,127,356	0	1,127,356	970,461
Inkind Donations	0	322,369	322,369	332,468
Interest & Miscellaneous Income	7,358	0	7,358	8,760
	<u>1,480,736</u>	<u>322,369</u>	<u>1,803,105</u>	<u>1,658,667</u>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Salaries & Benefits	765,248	300	765,548	698,317
Purchased Support Services	30,597	0	30,597	28,021
Events	275,175	178,364	453,539	433,475
Publications & Printing	16,611	0	16,611	14,391
Publicity & Promotions	28,775	17,677	46,452	43,035
Volunteer Training & Programs	93,117	73,079	166,196	108,232
General & Office	48,139	0	48,139	32,154
Rent - Office & Storage	17,252	39,783	57,035	42,384
Communications	18,529	0	18,529	18,090
Meeting & Travel Expenses	28,098	0	28,098	27,258
Professional Fees	8,024	13,166	21,190	37,118
Board & Liability Insurance	9,837	0	9,837	9,376
	<u>1,339,402</u>	<u>322,369</u>	<u>1,661,771</u>	<u>1,491,851</u>
<b>EXCESS REVENUES</b>	<u>141,334</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>141,334</u>	<u>166,816</u>

# 2014 program SPENDING

(not including in-kind)

education	33%
fundraising	22%
administration	12%
family support	21%
training	12%



## Threads of Life staff (as of December 31, 2014)

**Carin Whittal**  
Administrative Coordinator

**Colleen Youngblut**  
Regional Development Coordinator - Western Canada

**Heather Lyle**  
Regional Development Coordinator - Central Canada

**Kate Kennington**  
Manager - Family Support

**Kelley Thompson**  
Office and Administrative Assistant

**Kevin Bonnis**  
Regional Development Coordinator - Atlantic Canada & Quebec

**Sandra Hickman**  
Production Coordinator

**Sarah Wheelan**  
Communications Coordinator

**Scott McKay**  
Director - Fundraising & Partnerships

**Sharon Freeman**  
Coordinator, Steps for Life - Toronto

**Sherrie Zajac**  
Event & Data Management Coordinator

**Shirley Hickman**  
Executive Director

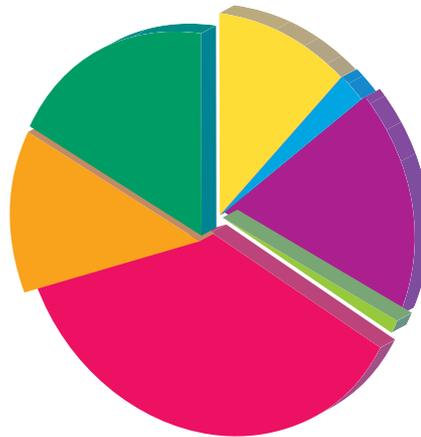
**Susan Haldane**  
Manager - Marketing & Communications

**Wendy Benedetti**  
LifeQuilt Project Coordinator

# 2014 income SOURCES

(including in-kind)

Steps for Life	36%
grants	19%
in kind	18%
misc. fundraising	13%
donations	11%
sponsorship family forum	2%
investments	1%



# Volunteers

## Supporting families and building awareness ...only because of you

You might find them chairing a board meeting, phoning businesses to find walk sponsors, talking to a grieving family member on the phone, driving a spouse to a speaking engagement, or even shopping for tea lights – Threads of Life volunteers do it all. Every year they donate thousands of hours, serving as Volunteer Family Guides, board

members, speakers and walk organizers, but also doing a million other tasks that may go mostly unnoticed. And they make it possible for the organization to accomplish what it does – in fact, our volunteers are Threads of Life.

volunteers  
donating  
1,000s of hours

### 2014 Volunteer Awards

A board member of Threads of Life  
A person who has donated time and expertise to Threads of Life for a minimum of two years

**Fred Fretz**

**Roy Ellis  
Paul Huston**

A Partner of Threads of Life  
A Friend of Threads of Life

**Mark's  
DDSB / Kerri Stewart**

### Program Advancement

- Family Support
- Partnership
- Community Action

**Lisa Shirley  
CSST  
Tom Buchanan**



### Steps for Life Recognition Awards for new communities:

- Lindsay ON
- Lloydminster AB
- Churchill Falls NL
- Sydney NS

# What's next?

**Coming soon...to a microphone near you**



No one was more surprised than Nevin Di Julio to find himself in a hotel boardroom recently, training to tell his personal story in front of an audience. The centre of attention is exactly where Nevin doesn't like to be. But like many Threads of Life family members, Nevin has a strong commitment to try to prevent others having to go through what he has experienced. After the family forum, he debated about getting involved with the organization. But when the invitation came to join the speakers bureau, he says "I got an answer to a question – the 'why me?' question." The answer was "why not me?"

"If I can talk to somebody and it enables them to come home at the end of the day, then it's worth it," he adds. "It's unfortunate that Threads of Life is needed, but it's a good thing it's there. It's given me some peace of mind, and I'd just like to give some of that back."

Nevin was invited to speak at the Charlottetown Steps for Life walk in 2015, and is ready to answer the call to tell his moving and inspiring story.



## Threads of Life strategic themes 2015

1. Positioning Threads of Life as the go-to support group for families suffering from a workplace tragedy
2. Delivering family support programs and services
3. Preventing further workplace tragedies to other families
4. Sustainability

### How can you help Threads of Life continue to grow?

- Make a monthly donation at [www.threadsoflife.ca/donate/monthly-gift](http://www.threadsoflife.ca/donate/monthly-gift)
- Follow our new blog at <http://threadsoflife.ca/blog/>
- Plan to walk at your local Steps for Life
- If you know someone affected by workplace tragedy, tell them about us!

*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. Although we are individuals, we are also connected in the fabric of life.*



#### THREADS OF LIFE

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www.stepsforlife.ca

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