

Spreading the **word**



Threads of Life
2017 Annual Report

CHAIR'S MESSAGE



Eleanor Westwood

Those of us who have been involved with Threads of Life a long time – for me it has been since the founding days – have watched the organization grow as

more and more people hear about our work. We have seen more government partners commit their support; more companies step up as sponsors or speakers bureau clients; more community members give their time; and as a result, more families discover they are not alone in the grief and confusion that follow a workplace tragedy.

Growing awareness is one of the “Four Asks” we make of new partners (see page 3 for the others). Of course we all wish no one needed to know about Threads of Life. But until our vision of safe and healthy workplaces is realized, they do need to know. And we all need to tell them. At many of our board meetings, we practice what we call our ‘elevator speeches’ – telling someone about Threads of Life in roughly the time it would take to ride with them in an elevator. For Threads of Life to help families heal and change safety cultures, we need to continue to spread the word to families, communities and companies. This annual report details the way that work was accomplished in 2017, and challenges each of us to take a role in growing awareness in the future.

It is through the inspiring commitment of our supporters that so many already know of Threads of Life, and that we are able to create hope and healing for more than 2,700 family members. Thank you to Threads of Life’s partners, corporate sponsors, board members, staff, and volunteers for giving your time, your energy and your voice.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

[as of December 31, 2017]

Eleanor Westwood, *Chair*

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

Karen Lapierre Pitts, *Vice-Chair*

Family Member, Nova Scotia

Jackie Manuel, *Treasurer*

CEO Newfoundland and Labrador Construction
Safety Association, Newfoundland and Labrador

Wally Power, *Secretary*

Family Member, Nova Scotia

Shelly Dauphinee, *Director*

VP WorkSafe Services,
WorkSafeNB, New Brunswick

Peter Deines, *Director*

VP Sales and Marketing,
CannAmm Occupational Testing Services, Alberta

Dennis MacDonald, *Director*

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

Wendy-Ellen Nittel, *Director*

Family Member, Alberta

Jim Sandford, *Director*

Family Member, Ontario

Bill Stunt, *Director and Past Chair*

Family Member, Ontario

Shirley Hickman, *Ex-officio Director*

Executive Director *Threads of Life*



Start spreading the news

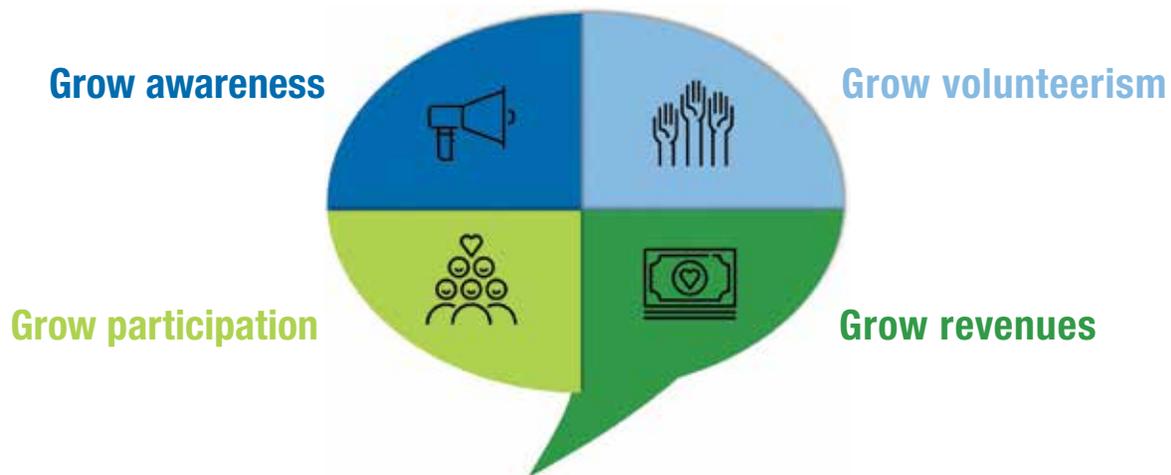
At the heart of Threads of Life's mission is our belief that anyone who has experienced a workplace tragedy should have access to Threads of Life programs, when the time is right for them. It's an ambitious goal, and before it can be achieved, people first need to know that these services are there for them. Threads of Life depends on an array of voices to spread the word.

THANKS TO YOU – our partners, participants and friends – more families are finding the help they need, at the time that's right for them.

The word spreads when WCB staff send out a letter and brochure following a tragedy, when Steps for Life committee members put up posters all over town, when family members share a Facebook message, when speakers share their stories, and when Threads of Life members talk about their journey.

Every time a partner, sponsor or supporter asks how they can help Threads of Life, we make four requests: that they help us to grow awareness, grow participation, grow volunteerism, and grow revenues. Awareness – that understanding of who Threads of Life is and what we offer – is the foundation for everything we've achieved and everything we hope to accomplish in the future.

THREADS OF LIFE'S FOUR ASKS



HOW FAMILIES FOUND US IN 2017





Families telling families

In 2017, 62 new families, or roughly 250 members, came to Threads of Life. A third found us through their compensation board or labour ministry; about 18 per cent of new members found us online through social media or the web; and another 18 per cent came via the annual Steps for Life – Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy events. Roughly 13 per cent heard about Threads of Life from a current family member.

Threads of Life is families helping families. Our Volunteer Family Guides (VFGs) are people who have experienced a work-related tragedy themselves, and complete special training in peer support. Many of the new families who came to Threads of Life in 2017 were paired with a VFG who could listen and let them know they're not alone. Newcomers are also invited to attend a regional family forum, where Threads of Life members welcome and support them. In 2017, 44 new family members attended forums for the first time, along with close to 200 returning family members.

One of the other important ways that Threads of Life families help other families is by telling them about how our programs have made a difference in their lives.

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Thank you to our family members for reaching out to others, and to our donors and partners for making the healing possible!

“

I lost my husband almost nine years ago but I didn't hear about Threads of Life until last year when another Threads of Life family member told me about them. How I wish we had heard about them at the beginning after our terrible loss. In the short time that I have been involved it has meant the world to me – not only in my own healing process but also with learning tools to help myself as well as to be able to help others. It is so important that families are aware of Threads of Life and how they can help. It can, has and will make a huge difference.”

-Rebecca Orr, AB

A network of hope

When a workplace tragedy occurs – whether it’s a fatality, a life-altering injury or a diagnosis of occupational disease – people are often desperate for information and connection. Thankfully, Threads of Life’s communication channels offer both. In 2017, 18 per cent of the new families who found Threads of Life came across us online through our web page or social media.

Our corporate web site was redesigned in 2017, and had more than 100 visitors each day. The site is designed to be welcoming and informative for anyone new to Threads of Life, as well as to provide the information that current members need about programs and events. Redesign of the web site for Steps for Life also began in 2017, aiming for a fresh site that’s easy to use for walkers, donors, and staff as well.

Threads of Life’s Facebook page is also a key point of contact and connection for existing families, and a way that new families find us. Twitter is an important outreach to new partners – every week new individuals, organizations and companies learn about Threads of Life through this channel.

Speakers spreading the word

In 2017 Threads of Life speakers shared stories and safety messages with

11,500
people



Our son Jesse was tragically killed in a workplace accident February 13, 2017. Our daughter found Threads of Life online. This seemed to be the perfect fit in a situation that no family ever wants to have to be in. We went on our first Steps for Life Walk last spring and then the Family Forum in the fall. Connecting with families that truly know what we are going through has helped us in so many ways.”

-Carol Hoehn, SK

Threads of Life communication channels



- Print newsletter:** Distributed quarterly to more than 2,500 subscribers
- Web site:** www.threadsoflife.ca, 100 visitors/day in 2017
- Facebook:** Facebook.com/threadsoflife - 1300 likes and follows; Facebook.com/stepsforlifewalk - 900 likes and follows
- E-newsletter:** 1600 readers each month, particularly H&S, HR professionals, partners and stakeholders
- Twitter:** Close to 2300 followers
- Other social:** Threads of Life also spreads the word via Instagram and LinkedIn

Talking the walk

Steps for Life - Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy is not only the signature fundraiser for Threads of Life; it's also one of the most far-reaching and effective forms of outreach the organization has. Whether it's posters on all the bulletin boards in town, stories about Steps for Life in the news, or crowds all wearing yellow t-shirts in the park on walk day, Steps for Life results in many new families finding Threads of Life - and many new companies and partners learning about the organization too. In 2017, 18 per cent of the new families we served, first heard about Threads of Life through the annual walks.



WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO ALL OUR volunteers, walkers and sponsors for ensuring they walk the safety talk... and also talk about the walk!



5100+ walkers



\$690,000 raised through sponsorships & donations



38 media articles



44 new family members



I was introduced to Threads of Life through my job when on our bulletin board there was an invitation to take part in a Steps for Life walk to honour workers killed or injured in the workplace. Having been injured at work myself, there are certain phrases that will instinctively trigger a response from me to leap into action. Phrases like, “workplace injuries” or “making workplaces safer” are just a couple. Being curious I did more research on the Steps for Life event and found out that Threads of Life is actually the parent organization. Researching more I found they have a speakers bureau. An opportunity for people like me to tell their story, in hopes of sending a message that one more death or one more injury is One Too Many. In May 2018 I will be taking part in my third Steps for Life walk. And I will be representing Threads of Life through their speakers bureau.”

- Glen Friesen, AB

Opening doors

From the very beginning, Threads of Life's partner organizations have been the main door through which most of our family members gain access to our programs and services. The provinces' labour ministries and compensation boards in particular support Threads of Life with funding and also spread the word in so many ways! They send out letters of invitation for Family Forums, distribute brochures to families, share information in their newsletters and on web sites, sponsor speaker presentations, and simply talk about what we do.



Staff of WorkplaceNL join Threads of Life's Scott McKay (standing at right) and speaker Paulette Raymond (sitting at right) following a partnership presentation.

Our corporate partners, too, raise awareness when they publish articles in their newsletters, bring speakers in to share their stories, donate space in their trade shows, or link to Threads of Life from their web sites.

In 2017, more than a third of new families first learned about Threads of Life through a compensation board, labour ministry or other partner. Without our partners, none of Threads of Life's work would be possible - thank you to all!



In the spring of 2017, I approached my mailbox and was intrigued to find a letter with a return address entitled Threads of Life. I had no idea what this could be. Workers Compensation Board of Nova Scotia had referred my name to Threads of Life in connection with a workplace accident that resulted in the death of my husband, Roger Stevens. The letter enclosed was an invitation to attend the Family Forum in May 2017. It was not easy to attend the Forum alone but I went hoping for help to cope with my profound loss. The Forum was an opportunity to meet other women with similar loss and to hear amazing grief specialists who impacted my thinking. I was grateful for the opportunity to attend the Forum and grateful for Kate Kennington and her compassionate approach."

-Cindy Stevens, NS



My first awareness of Threads of Life came from WSIB, however, at the time I was so in shock and grieving. I couldn't process much. It wasn't until several months later that a manager at the MOL suggested I reach out to Threads of Life for some much-needed support. I was warmly welcomed and invited to one of the Family Forums which I attended around the one year anniversary of my husband's death. I felt a strong connection to all the individuals, families and staff who had all been touched by losing a loved one to a workplace injury, illness or fatality. I was immediately accepted and understood by this amazing group of people. I am grateful that I was connected to the Threads of Life community and appreciate the MOL for reminding me that this invaluable support was available to families like mine."

-Cori Fleck, ON

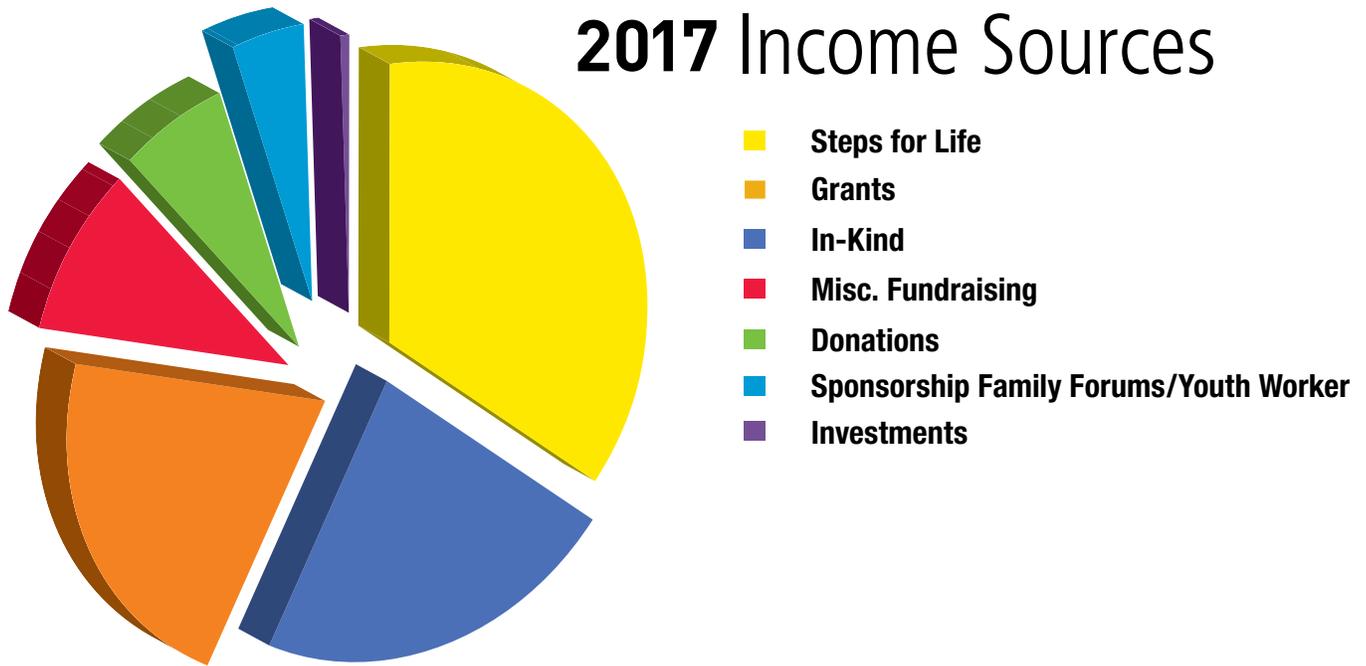
Summary of Financial Statements

	2017	2016
	Totals	Totals
ASSETS		
Current Assets	\$	\$
Cash & Marketable Securities	1,288,553	1,049,914
Accounts Receivable	21,499	80,897
Grants Receivable	0	0
GST/HST Recoverable	12,378	13,455
Prepays & Deposits	25,815	7,746
	<u>1,348,245</u>	<u>1,152,012</u>
LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	49,962	68,187
Deferred Revenue	173,694	88,000
	<u>223,656</u>	<u>156,187</u>
FUND BALANCES		
Unrestricted Operating Reserves		
	<u>1,124,589</u>	<u>995,825</u>
	<u>1,348,245</u>	<u>1,152,012</u>

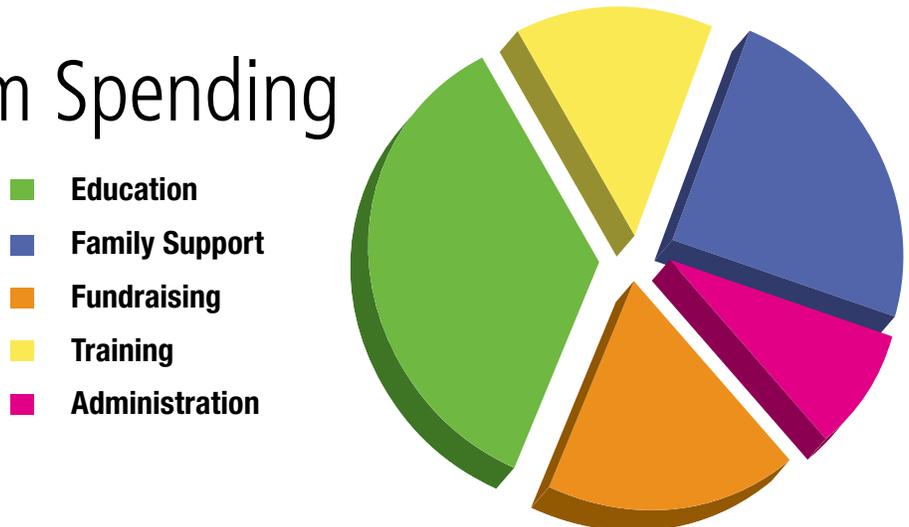
Audited financial
information available
upon request

	2017	2017	2017	2016
	Hard Costs	Inkind	Totals	Totals
REVENUES	\$	\$	\$	\$
Grants & Awards	445,000	0	445,000	341,000
Fundraising	1,080,829	0	1,080,829	1,052,187
Inkind Donations	0	423,549	423,549	365,426
Interest & Miscellaneous Income	6,221	0	6,221	8,424
	<u>1,532,050</u>	<u>423,549</u>	<u>1,955,599</u>	<u>1,767,037</u>
EXPENDITURES				
Salaries & Benefits	936,303	160	936,463	959,983
Purchased Support Services	22,793	180	22,973	21,035
Events	197,185	240,402	437,587	427,534
Publications & Printing	17,005	0	17,005	20,173
Publicity & Promotions	23,379	44,283	67,662	61,595
Volunteer Training & Programs	77,483	82,397	159,880	136,381
General & Office	36,953	10,689	47,642	41,638
Rent - Office & Storage	19,385	44,000	63,385	65,702
Communications	20,819	0	20,819	19,463
Meeting & Travel Expenses	40,582	13	40,595	40,790
Professional Fees	8,366	1,425	9,791	13,964
Board & Liability Insurance	3,033	0	3,033	2,905
	<u>1,403,286</u>	<u>423,549</u>	<u>1,826,835</u>	<u>1,811,163</u>
EXCESS REVENUES	128,764	0	128,764	-44,126

2017 Income Sources



2017 Program Spending



Threads of Life Staff as of December 31, 2017

Heather Lyle	National Manager – Steps for Life
Kate Kennington	Manager – Family Support
Kelley Thompson	Office and Administrative Assistant
Kevin Bonnis	Regional Development Coordinator – Atlantic Canada & Quebec
Kimberly Bondame	Administrative Coordinator
Lorna Catrambone	Regional Development Coordinator – Central Canada
Lynn Danbrook	Regional Development Coordinator – Western Canada
Patti Penny	Administrative Assistant
Sandra Hickman	Production Coordinator
Sarah Wheelan	Communications Coordinator
Scott McKay	Director – Fundraising & Partnerships
Sharon Freeman	Coordinator, Steps for Life - Toronto
Shirley Hickman	Executive Director
Susan Haldane	Manager – Marketing & Communications

Answering the call

Threads of Life is blessed with volunteers whose passion and commitment are helping to change health and safety culture in our country, and providing a safe place to land for families after the devastation of a work-related fatality, life-altering injury or occupational disease. We wish we could recognize every single one of them, but each year we select a few among our partners, friends, family members and community supporters whose efforts have helped us move closer to achieving our mission and vision. They are always helping to spread the word.



Jennifer Ruskowski (right) accepts her Community Action award from Threads of Life's Kelley Thompson

2017 Volunteer Awards

A PARTNER OF THREADS OF LIFE

CannAmm Occupational Testing Services
Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia

A FRIEND OF THREADS OF LIFE

M&T Printing Group
Bruce Power

PROGRAM ADVANCEMENT IN FAMILY SUPPORT

Patti Penny
Johanna LeRoux
Lisa Shirley
Julia Unruh

PROGRAM ADVANCEMENT IN COMMUNITY ACTION

Mark Roehler
Trish Penny
Estella Hickey
Lissa Gaudet
Nicole Lazaruk
Jennifer Ruskowski

STEPS FOR LIFE RECOGNITION AWARDS FOR NEW COMMUNITIES

Kingston
Fredericton

How to help spread the word



“ I learned about Threads of Life through WorkSafeNB and I decided to attend the family forum. If I could find something that could help with the grief I was going through I definitely wanted to go. It was one of the best things I did for myself that year. It helped me realize that I wasn't alone in my journey. I learned so much. The biggest thing I learned was that I wasn't crazy, I was grieving. Looking forward to attending my second family forum.”

-Debbie Berryman, NB

“ I had participated in the Steps for Life walk for two years and then on May 17, 2017 my family and I became an example of why Threads of Life exists after losing my dad to an accident that happened on his job site. Soon after losing him I reached out to Threads of Life to be part of the local committee in Calgary so I can help bring awareness about the importance of safety because I didn't want another daughter or any loved one to go through my loss. I know I can't prevent all of the workplace tragedies but I believe I can help reduce the amount that happen on a daily basis and Threads of Life has given me the opportunity to do that.”

-Ashling Boyd, AB

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

Charitable organization business #87524 8908 RR0001
Threads of Life is the Charity of Choice for workplace health and safety events.

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