



Widowhood & healing

It's not what you signed up for – whether you were a newlywed who found herself suddenly alone, or were looking ahead to a shared retirement when life changed your plans. In this issue, learn how women are coping, and healing, after workplace tragedy made them widows.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Bill Stunt

“Healing” is an ancient word, originally meaning to cure, save or make whole. When we talk about healing at Threads of Life, we often refer to a ‘journey of healing’. We recognize that we will never truly be “cured” or “saved”, whether the healing we need to do is emotional, or physical,

or a combination. But we are travelling in that direction. The experiences and learnings that are shared by widows (another ancient word) in this newsletter are inspirational. They have experienced tragedy and have found – are finding – ways to cope and even to thrive. Most journeys are better when we have company. And even solitary journeys can be made easier when we receive direction from others, and know someone else has passed this way before us. I hope each of us can find something in these stories to help smooth our own path. One of the great comforts of being involved in Threads of Life is knowing that we are all on this road together.

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THE DAY LIFE SHATTERED

“Life has not been easy trying to navigate this world alone.”

by Virginia Campeau



Paul liked to live simply

When I got married it was truly the best day that I could have possibly imagined. As I walked down the aisle and saw my future husband standing at the altar waiting for me, I knew we were going to be an unbeatable team. ‘Together forever until the ship sinks’, is what we always said to each other. Unfortunately, that wasn’t the case.

I met my husband Paul at work in 2010. When I first laid eyes on him my heart melted, and then when I heard him speak for the very first time, I knew instantly that he was the man I wanted to spend the rest of my life with. We started dating in 2012 and my instincts were not wrong. Paul was a caring, humble, and passionate man, who had a love for his family, friends, and me. His interest was driving his semi-truck, boating, fishing, and loving his dog Baloo. He liked to live simply; it didn’t take much to make him happy, just as long as he was with people and things that he loved. Our first date was the long weekend of August of 2012; he proposed to me on August long weekend of 2013; and we were married August 2 of 2014. Life couldn’t have been any better for us – for me I met and married my knight in shining armour. For the first time

in my life I truly felt loved, genuinely happy, safe, and looking forward to spending the rest of my life with my husband. A few months later my dream of growing old with the man I loved came crashing down, and the world as I knew it no longer existed.

It was January 6, 2015 when my life shattered. The day started like any normal work day. Paul’s occupation was driving a sand truck, maintaining the roads for winter. Every day I would text him during the day just to see how his day was going. I would always hear back from him, maybe not right away but eventually he would text me back. But this day was different. I texted him twice, and called him in the afternoon but by the time I left work I still hadn’t heard from him. I just thought he was in the bush without any cell service. I went to the gym after work and called him right after I was done. By this time it was 6 p.m., and still no answer. As I made it home I was eagerly anticipating his truck to be parked in the driveway, but to my disappointment, he wasn’t home. Again I tried calling him that evening only to get his voicemail. I was still thinking in my mind that maybe he was out of cell range, but deep down I was

getting a bit worried and had a feeling that something was not right. I remember texting his mom, and telling her that he wasn’t home yet, and that hopefully he would be soon. By this time it was around 9 or 10 at night, and my plan was to wait til about 11 and if he wasn’t home to start making some phone calls. As I sat on the couch waiting I feel asleep and woke up at 3 a.m. Paul was not home. I remember a tear rolling down my cheek as I scabbled to find numbers. I got hold of one of his co-workers, and they were going to go look for him and get back to me. I crawled into bed with my bible, waiting for some sort of news; again I feel asleep clutching my bible. January 7 at about 7:30 a.m. there was a knock at my door. I quickly sprang out of bed thinking it was Paul, that maybe he forgot his keys, but as I looked out the window, there were two police officers standing outside. They told me that Paul had an accident at work, and that he had passed away. I screamed, crying hysterically, backing away from them. All I could say was “no”. What were these cops telling me? I woke up with my husband the day before and now they are telling me that he’s dead. How can this be!

January 6 and 7 will always be the days that my life and world changed. There are still pieces that are blocked from my memory, and there are images that will forever be embedded in my memory. The female officer helped me get dressed that morning, as I needed to make my way to Paul's mom's house to tell her that her last born was dead. As we made our way to his mom's, I made phone calls to his friend and Paul's brother, still in disbelief letting them know. We arrived at his mom's. I can remember the crying, all the commotion, people coming in and out, so many people texting me, that I had to give my phone away. I just couldn't handle it, I was in complete shock.

As days went on, I had to be taken to the hospital by ambulance, given sedatives, and my daughter had to monitor me while I took my showers. I had no energy. I wanted all of our wedding pictures off the walls; I wanted all the flowers that people were sending me out of the house. I spent most of the days in my room crying out for Paul, not eating. I just wanted my husband back; I just wanted to be back in his arms; I just wanted things to go back to normal. A couple of days later the policeman came back to the house to bring me Paul's belongings. I wanted the clothes he was wearing, his wedding ring, and his wallet. Well I got his wedding ring and wallet, but nothing else. That day I had my family around me, and that's when the officer told me that Paul had become stuck in the auger. I remember seeing the look of horror on people's faces, but I still couldn't comprehend what the cop was telling me. As people tried to explain I just wasn't hearing it or I didn't want to hear it.

The day came when I finally got to see Paul after the horrible news. This is one of the images that will be forever embedded in my memory. Paul looked like he was sleeping. I was warned prior that some spots on his face were red with frostbite, and that some of his limbs were affected. Nothing could ever prepare a wife to see her husband like that. Paul's left leg was gone from the knee down, his right arm and leg were mangled. The only limb that wasn't affected was his left hand, his wedding ring hand. Seeing evidence that an autopsy was done on him was just devastating to me. Paul went through this by himself, he died alone and had to make that journey alone. I should have been there for him. He was so cold; I tried so hard to warm him up, but nothing was working, nothing at all. I sang to him the last verse to the gospel song Abide By Me, kissed him, then had to

leave him.

The next big heartache was to make it through his funeral. In August we were at that same church taking our vows, and now I am back to give him the send-off that he so deserved. I don't remember much about his funeral to this day. I do remember the church being full of people, the looks on people's faces, and all the cars that were outside. I wrote Paul a letter that I read at his funeral. I had my three sisters standing behind me as support. When I was done I went up to my husband's casket, and laid my head on top of his casket, where I kissed and hugged him for the very last time. I watched as his pallbearers carried him to his final ride and watched

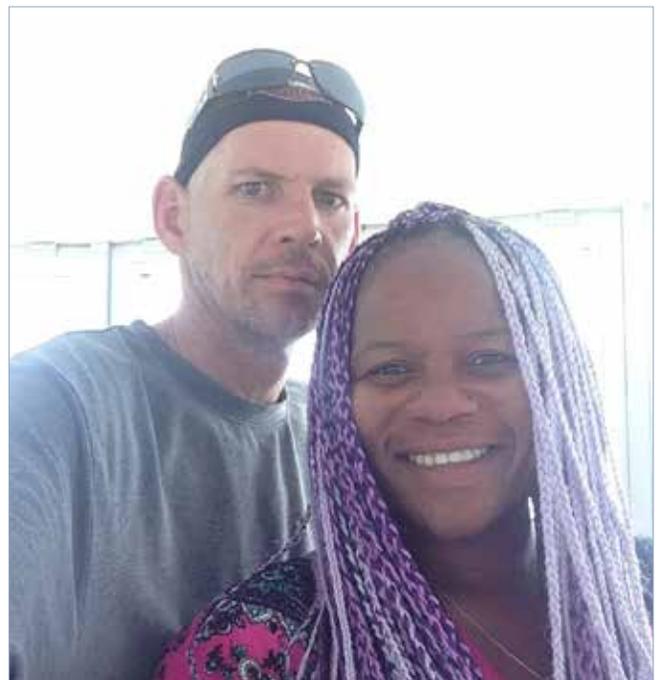
“ For the first time in my life I truly felt loved, genuinely happy, safe, and looking forward to spending the rest of my life with my husband

him drive away from me. Now I was left to go home to start the daunting task of packing his clothes away.

It was months after that I started finding out more about what happened that fateful day of January 6. Paul was working alone at the time; the last time Paul was seen alive was before 2:30 in the afternoon. I will never know the exact time Paul took his last breath, or what exactly happened, but the truck he was driving had previous issues. It appeared that when it was really cold outside there were issues with the auger getting jammed, and they were using a shovel as a temporary solution to get the sand through. A part was on order, but hadn't come in yet. If it did maybe things would have been different. Paul was found in the back of the hopper wedged in the auger with a shovel nearby,

completely frozen solid. The loader and truck were both still running when he was found. They had to do a partial amputation on his left leg, and dismantle the truck to remove him. He was working alone at the time, and there was no safety cover on the back of the hopper to protect him from moving parts. The impact of the auger ripped his clothes off from the waist down. One runner and one pair of gloves were missing. It is not known how much blood Paul lost because it was mixed in with the sand. Paul's personal half-ton truck was parked at his employer's from the time he left for work that morning, up until after he was found and no one even noticed.

Now I am left to find a new normal, to adapt to a life without Paul. Life has not been easy trying to navigate this world alone. I think about him every day. I have suffered secondary losses, such as financial loss, the loss of my job, changes in friendships, and learning how to trust and love again. With the help of WSIB, I started college in September of 2015, graduating in May of 2017 with a diploma as a Social Service Worker, and am now working for Child and Family Services. I have made, and taken comfort in new friends that have also lost their husbands and I became a proud grandmother to a granddaughter in 2018. I still cry for my husband, but I am finding that I have more good days than bad. During my journey, I also became a speaker for Threads of Life. This is how I will honor and keep Paul's memory alive, by sharing my story. If only I help just one family, then Paul's death won't be for nothing.



Paul and Virginia

THE GIFTS OF GRIEF

Finding ways to heal mind and spirit after tragedy

by April McCarthy

We had purchased a home in a new town and our kids were excited about starting at their new school and taking the bus to school each day. We were all excited about the move, especially my husband Chris. He had plans with our middle son Ben, who was 9, to play and coach hockey at the local arena, just minutes from our house. There wouldn't be a long commute to the boat for work anymore – it was a happy promising time. Our oldest son Mackenzie was 12 and had made a new best friend instantly and was happy with the opportunity to go to a more modern school. That summer we celebrated our daughter Lily's 6th birthday with her new little friends and on September 6, 2009 we celebrated Chris's 34th birthday, not knowing it would be his last with us.

My husband Chris was lost at sea September 12, 2009, after the crab boat he was working on took on water and sank coming in from the fishing grounds. Despite search and rescue efforts Chris's body was never recovered.

In the moments after I heard the news, I thought immediately 'it's over'. I knew the life that we had was over.

Ten years have passed and some days it seems like another lifetime I lived and some days it feels like yesterday since I last saw Chris. I can still recall clearly the last time I saw him, the last words he spoke, how his voice sounded, how his hair smelled and what his hand felt like in mine. A perfect fit.

I would be lying if I said that to be widowed at 33 wasn't hard – it was excruciating at



Chris and the kids

times. A physical, tangible ache, and that's how I felt for the first couple years: like I had suffered some permanent brain damage from the impact and I was just running slower because of all the worries and stresses of having to make all the decisions on my own now. The fog of grief was muddling my brain all the time.

I couldn't focus and concentrate, and I was often scared, left with not only my own heartache but that of three innocent children who were looking to me for everything now, their own sense of security dashed in the face of such an unexpected tragedy. At times I was also angry that they had to be touched by any of it.

The grief of losing Chris has taken so much from me, but it has taught me a lot and given me gifts as well and for those I am grateful.

The first lesson I learned, which I will tell you is the hardest, is acceptance: accepting what is and letting go of what can never be has been my greatest gift. It hasn't come easily. But with acceptance I have been able to find peace in what is our life since he died.

Grief gave me presence. It taught me to slow down and live in the moment.

A few months after Chris died the kids and I were cuddled up on the couch watching the coverage of the earthquake in Haiti and I really had an "Aha!" moment. There were these people who had lost everything. Lost their homes. Lost family members. They didn't know where they were going to sleep at night. They didn't have anything to eat and in that moment I thought to myself this could be so much worse. And I changed my perspective from there on. There is always someone who has it worse. So there's no point in wallowing in self-pity although I still have pity parties for one every now and then. You have to look at what you have and what you had, and really appreciate it. And I do, so much.

Very quickly I knew I could not stay in the darkness of grief. I began to focus on trying to meditate and live in the present moment as much as possible. I began to sit quietly by myself and just watch out the window while I ate my breakfast – just little things to try to quietly heal my mind and spirit. I wanted to feel happy again... have hope.

I had grown up in a small town, where

everyone knows each other and your business. I had been wishing for this move for years. I was so thrilled to be in this new town where no one knew me and I could have a new beginning in my life ... well, be careful what you wish for. After the tragedy, everywhere I went everyone knew who we were.

I was that little widow with three children who had lost her husband. I couldn't go to the store. I couldn't go to work. I couldn't go to the garage. Everywhere I went people knew who I was. They knew my story.

At first I found that very hard and I was a bit resentful because I didn't want to be identified as just the little widow, but now I feel it is part of who I am and it has been a gift because now I can share my story with others and they share their stories of loss with me and I feel honoured to be able to help them in some way.

Grief gave me the gift to appreciate my health.

I had a car accident the December after Chris died and had been going to physio and massage therapy for a year when in April 2011 I began working with a strength coach to rehabilitate my core. I remember after our first session I was shocked to find out how out of shape I was. He put his hand on my Jelly Belly and said 'engage your core'. I wanted to rip his arm off and beat him to death with it and hide his body under my basement stairs. I was so mortified!!

That set a fire inside me. I began researching everything I could about healthy eating and portion control. I wrote my goals on a little card and stuck it on my mirror. I started walking five miles every day with a friend and in May I started going to the gym four days a week. By October 2011, I had lost 67lbs, 97lbs in total from 2008 to October 2011. I wanted to build muscle because I wanted to be strong enough to carry my daughter to bed every night, just like her daddy used to. Now she is 16 and I am proud to say I can still carry her to bed! If she would let me!

This change in lifestyle led me to a passion for fitness and helping others and after struggling to get past my widow brain I got my personal training certification and became a fitness instructor. But grief gave me another unexpected and unwanted gift: Fibromyagia, brought on from post-traumatic stress and just not resting enough and taking on too much. So my old lesson of acceptance was taught to me again and I had to make a career change and return to post-secondary school.

Grief gave me gratitude.

I know some people might think, how can you be grateful after everything you've been

through? But ... what's not to be grateful for? I am grateful for how it has made me become a better mother. I am probably a better mother now than I possibly ever would have been before this tragedy. A few days after I heard the boat sank I made the choice that I would not let my children lose the mother they had known as well as their father. Looking back now I know that was a very powerful choice. I could not lie down and bury myself in my grief...I had to be present for them.

I am grateful for the relationship I have with my children. We are so close. It has bonded us and brought us together in a way that I can't imagine anything else would have. I am blessed that I got to really enjoy them as children.

We had dance competitions in our kitchen, played 'would you rather' when we were out to supper, we traveled together and laughed so much. I feel so blessed to experience new places and make memories with them; to watch them grow into the amazing people they have become.

Although in the beginning I was very unsure and very scared making decisions that would affect them and our lives, now they are 24, 19 and 16, and I am so proud of the people that they are and excited about the future that they will have. Recently my boys moved out and got an apartment together. It was sad but I am grateful that they are starting their adult lives. Some friends I met through Threads of Life who have lost children remind me some kids don't get to do that.

Several months after Chris passed away my oldest son Mackenzie was very quiet. He

didn't talk very much about his father and what happened and of course I was concerned. I was concerned that maybe he wasn't grieving as I thought he should have been and in his infinite wisdom at 12 years old he said to me, "Mom I just want to be a kid. I just want to spend time with my friends and go to school and I don't want to focus on this every day." And I thought 'oh my God you are so right Mackenzie.' I learned not to judge someone else's grief journey. Everyone deals with grief in their own way and I had to let him deal with his in his way.

Years later we were driving out to the city to pick up his tux for his graduation and on the way I was feeling very nostalgic, and a little emotional. I said I hoped he thought I did a good job with him. He had stepped in at a very young age and become Man of the House and that maybe he had missed out on some things.

And I will never forget what he said to me: "Mom you know what I tell people when they ask me how did I get through losing my father? I say I got through it because my mom is the strongest person I know."

I guess I didn't do too bad after all.

I am grateful for the fact that I was married to my best friend, who was a wonderful father to my children and somebody that they could look up to as a man.

I got to spend time with an incredible person. I was blessed to have his presence in my life for as long as I did. I got to be a main character in his life story and he was the key witness to mine. And for that I will be eternally grateful.



The McCarthy family today



Maryanne and John

On September 29th, 2000, my husband, Constable John Petropoulos of the Calgary Police Service, was investigating a break and enter complaint at a warehouse when he stepped through an unmarked false ceiling, fell nine feet into the lunchroom below and died of head injuries. There was no safety railing in place to warn him – or anyone else – of the danger. The complaint turned out to be a false alarm; there was no intruder in the building.

My wake-up call, however, was devastatingly real. John was 32. We both were. So began my free-fall into the grieving process...a young widow with a broken heart, a shattered soul, an empty home and a determination to ensure something good came out of such a senseless tragedy.

Over the past 19 years, I have worked with the John Petropoulos Memorial Fund (JPMF) to help raise public awareness about why and how to ensure workplaces are safe for everyone, including emergency responders. Please visit the JPMF website to view our TV ads and safety video.

I became an author, playwright, screenwriter and blogger. Writing my book, *A Widow's Awakening*, helped me heal. Publishing it has helped others on their journey through grief.

Over the years, I have learned an awful lot about grief – the good, the bad and the ugly. There is the old saying, “Time heals all wounds,” but I beg to differ. Time lessens the pain, yes. But in my experience, it’s what we do with our time that will ensure whether – or not – we truly heal.

In fact, I would be as so bold to suggest that on some level, we may not want to fully heal – ever – because that might somehow lessen the love we had for the one we lost. But being happy again might just be the greatest tribute of all to our loved one.

If you have recently (or not so recently) lost a loved one, here are 5 healthy ways to help heal a broken heart:

1. Be aware of what you are choosing as coping mechanisms.

Unhealthy coping mechanisms are ways by which we try to escape our pain...alcohol, drugs, eating (too much or not enough), shopping, incessant busyness, becoming a workaholic, etc.

If the coping mechanisms you’re using are no longer serving you, make a conscious change to healthier ones, such as:

- Get physically active...whatever it is, make it a habit.
- Get out into nature...a walk in the woods can soothe the soul like nothing else.
- Consider getting a pet. My two dogs helped me get through the toughest years. They were always happy to see me and their enthusiasm made me smile. They gave me unconditional love and their needs forced me to get out for a walk every day.
- Volunteer. When we are helping others, the focus on our own tragedy diminishes.
- Read inspirational books and watch uplifting movies, especially comedies.
- Be around people who love you, listen to you, support you and can make you smile.

2. Honour the hurt.

The sooner you acknowledge (admit to yourself) the full extent of your loss and the seemingly bottomless depth of your hurt, the sooner you’ll be able to heal. When we deny our own truth – as horrific as that may be – we only postpone the healing process.

Here’s a trick: whenever hurt comes to the surface, don’t run from feeling it. Instead, STOP whatever you are doing and simply FEEL the loss, the sorrow, the pain, the hurt, the anger. Yes, you will cry...but not forever. The sooner you release those emotions, the better.

3. Express/share what you are thinking and feeling.

Talk to a good friend and/or a professional about what you are really experiencing. Be honest! You may be thinking and/or feeling some awfully strange stuff (says I from experience), so the sooner you can get that OUT, the better.

The catch, however, is to choose the person wisely. They must be a good listener, empathetic and non-judgmental. Most importantly, it cannot be about them. You know you’ve found a good person to talk to when you leave the conversation feeling better than when you started.

4. Find a positive outlet for negative emotions.

Whether that is finding a way to transform your hurt into something beneficial for others, finding a personal way to honour who and/or what has been lost, or simply finding joy and purpose in your new life...do something purposeful that is meaningful to YOU and brings you moments of happiness again. Those happy moments will begin to expand. Nature abhors a vacuum, so be very aware of what you allow to fill it, especially negative thoughts.

5. Take it one day at a time – baby steps!

Give yourself permission to make mistakes because you will...again and again. And that’s okay. For me, the grieving process felt like one step forward then two steps back. But the more small steps forward

I took, the less time I spent beating myself up for going backwards.

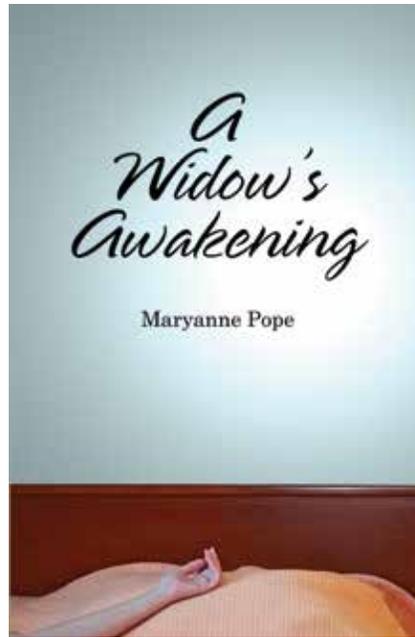
And remember: “The only courage that matters is the kind that gets you from one moment to the next.”

– Mignon McLaughlin

If we have the courage to truly love in this life, we will get hurt. Grief is a natural, normal and healthy response to the anguish that goes with learning to live without someone we have loved very much. Grief has a very significant role to play, yes – but it’s up to us to recognize when it has become more of a hindrance than a healer.

Maryanne Pope is the author of *A Widow’s Awakening*, the playwright of *Saviour* and the screenwriter of *God’s Country*. Maryanne is CEO of Pink Gazelle Productions and Chair of the John Petropoulos Memorial Fund.

If you would like to receive her weekly blog, please visit PinkGazelle.com.



A WIDOW’S AWAKENING

is the candid portrayal of Maryanne’s journey through the first year of grief after the on-duty death of her police officer husband, as the result of a preventable fall at an unsafe workplace. Engaging, powerful and heart-wrenching, this book captures the immense difficulty of accepting the unacceptable while learning to transform loss into positive change. Over 2000 copies sold. To order a copy (\$20 each), please contact Threads of Life.

Finding your way again



Loneliness is one of the hardest feelings to cope with after the death of a spouse. Losing a spouse is not only devastating, but also can be very intense and overwhelming. “Normal grief” doesn’t feel normal. So how do we move forward when we lose someone close to us, especially a partner or spouse?

So many variables will contribute to grief reactions for each person.

After all, a partner is often a best friend, soulmate, a lover, a co-parent, source of emotional support and financial support. Navigating life alone can be very complicated. Many things will change, as your mind and body struggle to accept the loss.

It can be helpful to hear, and important to understand, that profound or deep feelings of grief are actually normal. It’s very common to feel depressed, confused, angry, and sad. This does not in any way mean that normal is easy, kind, or even makes sense right now. What it does explain is that when a person is faced with a significant, life-changing event such as this, there is a period of time where uncertainty and fear can take over and feelings of hopelessness and sadness are common.

If, however, overwhelming feelings of anxiety and depression persist for many months or years, and the acute pain of grief is so strong that you can’t seem to move past it, you may be experiencing complicated grief. Complicated grief can become unhealthy and lead to serious

by **Karen Lapierre Pitts**, Family Support Manager

risk or distress in some people. Loneliness and depression can often lead those dealing with a loss into a downward spiral that is hard to break.

Even starting to heal from devastating loss takes time, and with partner loss it can be particularly scary and hard to find a way forward.

A bereavement support group may be helpful to learn how to cope with grief.

Receiving support from co-workers, friends and family is important especially in the beginning. Having people to talk to or ask for assistance can help.

Connecting to a Volunteer Family Guide at any time during your grief journey is also an option. Maybe you’ve just lost your partner, or maybe you’re finding it hard as time goes on and things change. Talking to someone one-on-one who has been through it and understands some of what you may be feeling can be very helpful. Please contact me if you’d like to be connected to a family guide, and if you already have a VFG, remember that person is always happy to have a check-in with you, even if it’s been some time since you last talked.

Resilience is a term that we use often with the bereaved. It sounds easy, but we’re not all designed to know what to do when a tragedy occurs. In some ways I find the term “resilience” to be a little misleading. Ultimately, real resilience in grief work depends on our own inner resources. Identifying or strengthening those inner resources may start with talking to your doctor about the way you feel or seeing a professional counsellor or therapist for extra support.

Remember to take good care of yourself. Grief affects how you feel emotionally and has many physical effects too. Getting back to doing some things that are good for you and that you enjoy will help you regain some energy. Go at a comfortable pace that is good for your healing. It will take time to adjust to life without your partner – allow yourself that time.

Three new members join **Board of Directors**

This fall, the Threads of Life board welcomes three new directors. The board's role is to set Threads of Life's strategic direction and ensure the organization has the processes and structure in place to accomplish its mission.



SEAN ALGER

Sean was born and raised in Prince Rupert, BC and currently lives in Edmonton, AB with his lovely wife Jill and their four-year-old son Levi. Sean graduated from Simon Fraser University with a Bachelor of Business Administration and is a CPA in Canada and the United States. Sean joined Ledcor in 2008 as a Director of Finance and over the past 10 years, has held a number of positions. Sean is currently the SVP of Health, Safety & Environmental Protection and Corporate Services, which includes Information Services, Strategic Sourcing, Facilities, Equipment, Quality and Shared Services. Sean's focus on the planning and execution of safe production and his drive for a more collaborative and consistent approach, bring added value to the business operations. Sean looks forward to sharing what he has learned in business and in life to support the Threads of Life with their journey in preventing future tragedies by reinforcing why workplace safety is important.

Sean says: "I look forward to supporting Threads of Life with their journey in helping those affected by workplace tragedies. With the industries that Ledcor is involved in, from construction to telecommunications to oil and gas, I plan to share the experiences and learnings from Threads of Life back to my organization to reinforce the importance of prevention and workplace safety."



ERIN PITRUZZELLA

Erin's education is in psychology and English studies. She has worked for 20 years in sales and service roles in the financial industry. Erin is a mother of two young adults. In 2009, Erin's family experienced a devastating workplace tragedy. She has since become a member of Threads of Life, and a volunteer in their speakers bureau.

Erin says: "From the moment I attended my first Threads of Life Family Forum many years ago, after my husband's workplace fatality, I felt that I had finally found my 'home'. I have always put family at the heart of what I do in life. Whether it is my immediate family, professional family or my Threads of Life family, I am passionate about protecting my families. I have had the opportunity to meet others and hear their unique stories of tragedy and loss. I felt everyone deserves to know they are not alone and these accidents and injuries are unacceptable in our society. When I was approached to consider the position of Director I did not hesitate. I wanted to make a difference and be part of the solution for the voices that had been silenced. I will work diligently to motivate our members to make a difference. Working with the Board will allow me to use my skills in communication, customer service and finance as well as gain new skills. I look forward to working with a diverse group of Threads of Life family members, professionals and our hard working staff to effect a positive change needed in our communities."



TRACEY MINO

Tracey was born and raised in Southwestern Ontario close to the shores of Lake Huron. She studied accounting in college and later earned her certificates as a registered reflexologist and massage therapist. In 2006 Tracey suffered a life altering injury that left her with a permanent shoulder disability. She lives with her husband, John and their son Daniel in Woodstock. Tracey enjoys dancing, yoga and travelling. In 2010 Tracey's family suffered a devastating workplace tragedy. Tracey is now a volunteer with Threads of Life as a Volunteer Family Guide, and a member of the Speaker's Bureau.

Tracey says: "I have seen first-hand how incredible the help and support is, that Threads of Life has provided to my family and others I have met through various Threads of Life functions. I volunteered to become a Threads of Life speaker to spread the message of prevention and the importance of safety first. I am hoping by becoming a Director to contribute in a bigger way, to spread the word even further."

Volunteer corner: **It's all here!**

"Gosh, where did I store that blank expense form? And wasn't I supposed to submit my volunteer hours somehow?"

If this sounds familiar, we can help. The Threads of Life web site includes a one-stop location where volunteers can find all the information, forms and documents you need. The volunteer corner includes links to your expense form plus the form for submitting your volunteer hours. Both of these are incredibly important to ensuring we know the scope of the work our volunteers are doing for the organization.

If you have any suggestions for information that would be helpful to access through the volunteer corner, please let us know!

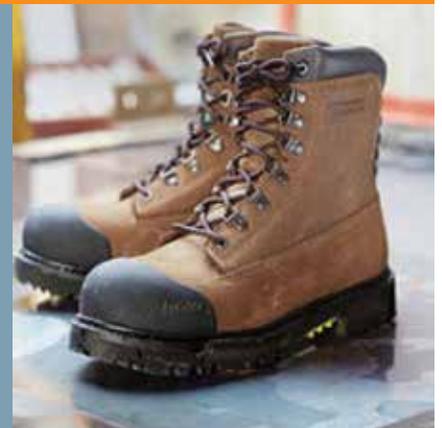
Need a pair of work boots? **Consider Mark's**

If you're looking for a pair of antislip footwear, you might want to consider checking out Mark's. This large Canadian retailer will donate a portion of proceeds from the sales of the antislip Tarantula line of work boots. Look for our logo on the boot tag.

A portion of your boot purchase will be donated to Threads of Life.

Smart
Clothes.
Everyday
Living.

Mark's



Scholarships awarded to 4 individuals affected by **work related tragedy**



Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support

Four families are receiving a boost on their way to healing and success, thanks to scholarships from Threads of Life and the Board of Canadian Registered Safety Professionals (BCRSP). The scholarships are being awarded to four individuals affected by workplace tragedy, who will be attending post secondary institutions a this fall.

A tragedy in the workplace, whether it's a fatality, life-altering injury or occupational disease, affects a family emotionally, economically and in many other ways. The scholarship, launched this year, is intended to provide support for a family member to pursue higher education.

The national scholarship recognizes academic achievement, community involvement, and need.

Monica Szabo, Chair, BCRSP says "The BCRSP is honoured to partner with Threads of Life and contribute to this scholarship. It is a great opportunity for our organization to support those whose lives have been impacted by a workplace tragedy in their pursuit of higher education."

This year's recipients are:

- Dion Durant, Nova Scotia
- Stacy Gaylord, Saskatchewan
- Haley Harroun, Alberta
- Brodie Bergman, Prince Edward Island (Deferred)

"We had a number of very strong applications, and our decision was not easy," says Threads of Life Executive Director Shirley Hickman. "We hope that receiving this scholarship will make the path a little smoother for these four people who are trying to cope with the effects of tragedy and make their way in the world."

Scholarships will be awarded annually, and applications for 2020 will open early in the new year. The Board of Canadian Registered Safety Professionals (formerly the Association for Canadian Registered Safety Professionals) is a public interest, not-for-profit association whose certificant are dedicated to the principles of health and safety as a profession in Canada. The Board of Canadian Registered Safety Professionals sets certification standards for occupational health and safety professionals.

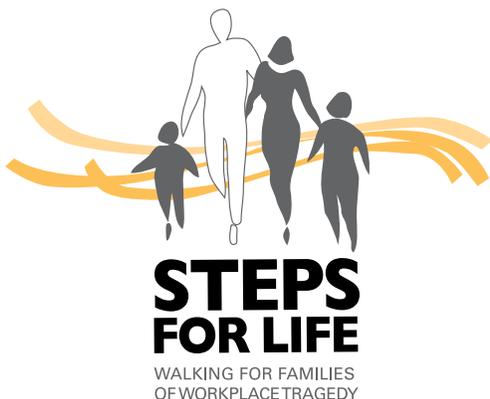
Steps for Life: What's your WHY?

Little kids ask the big **“Why”** questions all the time: **“Why”** is the sky blue? **“Why”** is grandma’s skin wrinkly? **“Why”** do people get sick? As we get older, we don’t think so much about **“Why”**, but deep down it’s still there – the thing that motivates us; our reason for doing the things we do. Our **“Why”**.



Steps for Life – Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy sets a lot of peoples’ “whys” into motion. Some people get involved in Steps for Life because of a personal experience with workplace tragedy – a loved one’s death or injury, or their own injury or illness. Others are motivated by a commitment to safety, or want to support their community. Many appreciate the camaraderie of being part of a team or group of volunteers.

Whatever your reasons for being part of Steps for Life, we’ll be asking you to think about them personally, and consider naming them publicly, as we ramp up to Steps for Life 2020. Watch for our hashtag #mywhy.



STEPS FOR LIFE 2019 - SNAPSHOT

25 Communities hosted Steps for Life walks across Canada

5,500+ people walked, including **246** community teams across Canada

Over **\$770,000** was raised, including **\$270,000+** in sponsorship

THANKS TO FUNDS RAISED THROUGH STEPS FOR LIFE:

228 new family members found Threads of Life in 2018;

More than **200** family members attended a family forum;

2,800 receive a copy of Threads newsletter each quarter;

8,500 people heard our speakers’ messages last year.

Coming Events

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

Prairie-Western Family Forum –
September 27-29, 2019

Central Family Forum –
October 25-27, 2019

SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER!

Pass it along or leave it in your
lunchroom or lobby for
others to read.

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.
London, ON N6E 2V0

contact@threadsoflife.ca
www.threadsoflife.ca
www.stepsforlife.ca



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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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