

Hello and welcome,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of Threads of Life, I would like to welcome you to Threads of Life and thank you for volunteering. Since Threads of Life began in 2003, volunteers have been the driving force of our organization. We started with three volunteers, and now have over 300.

The dedication of our volunteers is the reason for our success, because volunteers are at the core of all we do. From delivering peer-support programs and sharing our message to planning and attending events, and leading and guiding the organization, volunteers play an integral role.

I hope that your volunteer experience will be rewarding and enjoyable. The staff is here to support you in whatever way we can. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask me or a member of the team.

Thank you, once again, for choosing to volunteer with Threads of Life. You are joining a wonderful team of volunteers who are making a real difference in the lives of those who have experienced a workplace fatality, life-altering injury or illness.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shirley Hickman".

Shirley Hickman  
Executive Director  
shickman@threadsoflife.ca

## What Is Threads of Life?

The Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support — Threads of Life is a registered national charity dedicated to supporting families along their journey of healing after they have experienced a workplace fatality, life-altering injury or illness. Through a variety of peer-support programs and community action initiatives, Threads of Life offers families a support network of people who have experienced similar pain and suffering from a workplace tragedy.

Threads of Life refers to those we serve as “family members”, which not only recognizes their relationship to an injured or deceased worker, but also reflects the fact that, through their involvement with Threads of Life they invariably become a part of another family of individuals who have had a similar, tragic experience.

As a charitable organization, Threads of Life relies on donations from corporations, Provincial Labour Ministries, health and safety associations and individuals to fund delivery of programs and services.

A volunteer Board of Directors establishes the Strategic Objectives of the organization and provides governance and oversight to ensure the objectives are met.

**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.

**Our Vision:** Threads of Life will lead and inspire a culture shift as a result of which work-related injuries and deaths are morally, socially and economically unacceptable.

**Our Values:** Threads of Life believes in

- **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 begin in our heads, hearts and hand, in everyday actions
- **Passion** – Passionate individuals can change the world



Each year in Canada close to 1000 people die as a result of work-related injury or disease

### Why Do We Need Threads of Life?

On any given workday in Canada, three people will die from a job-related fatality, life-altering injury or occupational disease. Even one is too many.

These individuals leave behind families, friends and co-workers devastated by this tragic loss and woven together by a need for support.

Threads of Life exists to provide a “soft place to land” for families who have experienced a workplace tragedy. Founded in 2003, Threads of Life was created to fill a major gap in the health and safety and social systems in Canada. Services provided by Threads of Life help to mitigate the effects of this gap which can include psychological problems, stress related physical health problems, substance abuse, marital breakdown and more.

### Volunteers and Threads of Life

Volunteers are, and have always been, the backbone of Threads of Life. Volunteers provide peer support, facilitate sessions at Family Forums, speak at conferences and events, plan fundraising activities, provide governance and leadership as members of the Board of Directors, and help raise awareness of the organization in a myriad of ways.

Threads of Life has over 300 volunteers who contribute approximately 9000 hours of service each year. All staff at Threads of Life interact with our volunteers on a regular basis and are more than happy to offer assistance and support to ensure our volunteers are successful in their roles.

## How Does Threads of Life Help Families?

Threads of Life provides a variety of Family Support programs and services that offer hope and healing in the wake of a workplace tragedy:



**Volunteer Family Guides** are specially trained volunteers who have experienced their own workplace tragedy and offer support, acceptance and understanding.



**Regional Family Forums** offer families a chance to network, connect with others and share their experiences. Workshops offer practical information and strategies to help cope with grief, navigate the health and safety and legal system, and practice self-care.



**Newsletter:** *Threads* is a free, quarterly newsletter featuring personal stories of those affected by workplace tragedy, poems, reference materials and information on Threads of Life's events and activities.



**Speaker's Bureau** volunteers are family members who share their personal experience with workplace tragedy at health and safety events, schools, and workplaces.



**Steps for Life** is Threads of Life's signature fundraising event. It unites families, corporate leaders and health and safety professionals to walk, raise awareness of the importance of injury prevention, and raise funds to support programs and services.

For more information about Threads of Life's services [please refer to the Programs section](#) of our website for full program descriptions.

We encourage you to [take a moment to view Erin's Story](#) for a brief look at how Threads of Life helped one family following a workplace fatality.



Approximately 200 people a year come to Threads of Life for support, adding to the thousands we already serve

## What we ask of you

### Report Volunteer Hours

Threads of Life asks that all volunteers track and report the hours they dedicate to programs and events. This information is helpful to us in measuring the value of our volunteer programs. In addition we are often required to report on volunteer involvement when applying for or reporting on grants. Reporting volunteer hours [can be done online](#) or by completing the [In-Kind Contribution Form](#) found on our website.

### Provide and Update Contact Information

As a new volunteer you will be asked to complete a volunteer application form that provides your contact details, an emergency contact person, and other information. If your contact information changes, we ask that you please let us know so we are able to keep in touch.

### Spread the Word

Threads of Life is active on various social media sites including [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#). We invite you to join us here and like and share our posts. In addition, you may wish to [sign up to receive our blog, quarterly print newsletter, or monthly e-news.](#)

### Keep in Touch

We understand that circumstances can change and the time you can commit to a volunteer role may be more limited than you first thought. If you are unable to fulfill your volunteer commitment, we ask that you please let us know. If you need to put your volunteering on hold temporarily, we can accommodate that need. If you need to step back on a permanent basis, it helps us to know that also.

### Threads of Life Contact Information

Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 9066  
1795 Ernest Ave.  
London, ON N6E 2V0  
Direct: 519-685-4276 or  
Toll Free: 1-888-567-9490  
email: [contact@threadsoflife.ca](mailto:contact@threadsoflife.ca)

## Policies & Procedures

As part of our commitment to offering an enjoyable, safe and fulfilling volunteer experience, Threads of Life has a set of core policies that guide the day to day operation of the organization. At the beginning of your volunteer experience you will be asked to read and sign off on the Threads of Life Code of Conduct for Volunteers and the Transportation & Driver Safety Policy. Certain volunteers will need to complete a Police Records Check and repeat it every three years. Some volunteers will be asked to certify in the delivery of Accessible Customer Service by providing proof of existing training or taking the free online training offered by Threads of Life.

The following is a summary of additional policies that relate to our volunteers. Full policies are available for you to review by request:

## Volunteer Involvement and Management

The continued success of Threads of Life is dependent on maintaining a respectful and meaningful relationship between staff and volunteers. With this in mind, Threads of Life commits to ensuring that:

- volunteers will receive appropriate orientation, training and ongoing support
- volunteer contributions will be acknowledged and recognized
- volunteer assignments align with the mission, vision and values of Threads of Life
- volunteer programs are regularly evaluated

## Prescription, Over the Counter, Recreational Drug & Alcohol Use

While performing corporate business on behalf of Threads of Life, volunteers are prohibited from the use of, abuse of, involvement in the manufacturing of, distribution of, possession of or dispensation of illegal drugs. Volunteers are also prohibited from using alcohol and other legal drugs to the extent that it violates laws, negatively affects Threads of Life activities, or adversely affects the reputation of the organization.

Volunteers who use legally prescribed drugs during volunteering, and have any reason to expect that such use may affect their ability to perform work, must report this fact to the program manager. Volunteers who are experiencing work-related or personal

problems resulting from alcohol or drug abuse or dependency are encouraged to seek confidential assistance.

## Volunteer Expenses and Reimbursement

As a Threads of Life volunteer you may be required to incur some expenses in the course of volunteering. If there are likely to be expenses associated with a volunteer assignment, you would be notified ahead of time. Threads of Life will reimburse reasonable expenses incurred while volunteering. This may include travel expenses such as mileage, accommodation and meals. Volunteers are required to view the Volunteer Expenses and Reimbursement policy for full information on what expenses are allowable and how to submit expenses to be reimbursed. A [Volunteer Expense Form](#) can be found and downloaded from our website.

## Complaints

As a volunteer you may have a complaint, or receive complaints about a Threads of Life activity, service, program, staff member or volunteer. Threads of Life commits to resolving all complaints promptly and in a way that is fair, impartial and respectful to all parties. Threads of Life's Complaints Policy and Procedure would be followed to resolve any issues.

## Privacy

Threads of Life's privacy policy is intended to meet the needs of our members, donors and the public and adheres to applicable Canadian privacy legislation and industry standards.

## Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention

Violent or harassing behaviour in the workplace is unacceptable from anyone. All employees, volunteers and members of Threads of Life are expected to uphold this policy and to work together to prevent workplace violence and harassment.

## Whistleblowers

Threads of Life's Whistleblowers policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns internally so Threads of Life can address and correct inappropriate conduct and actions.