

threads of life

VOL.19, NO.2 Summer 2021

PREVENTION

SUPPORT

PARTNERSHIP



WE WALKED Together!

Maybe we couldn't ALL be hand-in-hand, side by side for Steps for Life this year, but you all embraced our theme #WeWalkTogether in a hundred different ways. We were together in spirit, heart-in-heart, rain or shine, and together we made a huge difference for health and safety, and for Threads of Life families. *Read more on pages 10 and 11.*



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Bill Stunt

Our family stories in this issue of *Threads* highlight both newer issues, and old, familiar ones. It takes courage for Brenda Duhaime to share how her husband Bobby fell victim to bullying at work – a psychosocial hazard that's only now being brought into the light. On the

other hand, it seems we've been talking about young worker safety for ever, and yet every year new and young workers are injured and killed on the job. Elisa Kilbourne shares her son Jeremy's story in the hope of preventing similar tragedies. That passion for prevention is the common thread between these two stories. And a passion for prevention weaves together the work of all our members, volunteers and supporters featured in this issue.

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Miracles rising out of tragedy

Summer job causes death of loved and respected athlete and student

by **Elisa Kilbourne**

The summer of 2013 was exciting and filled with many blessings. My daughter Kaitlyn had just graduated from Teacher's College at Western University and was about to start her career; Jeremy was entering his fourth year in the Criminology program with plans to go into law enforcement; Karl and I were comfortable in the lifestyle we had created and were anxiously waiting the completion of our newly built home.

Thursday, August 1st, did not seem to stand out as peculiar, even though I hesitated at the bedroom doors deciding whether to wake up Kaitlyn or Jeremy, to take me to work. I woke Jeremy and he was not impressed with my choice, making it a quiet drive to Western University campus where I worked. Jeremy had a ball game that evening, and I planned to visit with my aunt while we watched his team play. As I got out of the vehicle, I said, "See you tonight Bud" and I began the trek to my building. I recall looking back at the vehicle as he drove away, shook it off, then went about my usual business. Jeremy messaged after lunch saying they would be working late and had already texted 'Coach' that he wouldn't make it to the game. I cancelled with my aunt and devised a new plan for my evening.

It was around 6:30 pm, while we were eating supper, that the London CTV News announced a breaking story... 'Two were killed while putting up a wedding tent near Watford, Ontario'. My stomach sank; Karl and I exchanged looks. Jeremy had used similar words the night before indicating where he was working. Karl sent an urgent text to Jeremy and my mom called in a panic, as they had also watched the news cast.



Jeremy and sister Kaitlyn at Jeremy's graduation

I knew Jeremy was expected to work late because of his text message earlier in the day. I started making excuses in my mind that he was okay; he was just busy, right? We would have received a call if there was a problem, right? He was one of six crew members, so there was no way he could be one of the young men who died, right? However, my gut instinct told me it HAD to be their crew. I had grown up near Watford and the odds of there being two weddings that weekend, let alone with a tent being installed that day were slim.

The next few minutes, hours, days became a blur. I do not recall how things went down exactly, but rather the inability to breathe, ringing ears and fuzzy vision; what I now realize was debilitating shock.

As the minutes kept ticking, we didn't hear from Jeremy. I decided to go upstairs and focus on organizing the calendar for packing the remainder of the house, confirming the movers, lawyer meeting and so forth before the move. Unable to focus, I anxiously watched out the window for our car to drive into the laneway and praying no police car would show up. Besides, those things only happen in the movies.

But the unthinkable happened – at 8 pm a police car parked across from our house. They rang the doorbell and told us Jeremy had been killed on the job. The next few minutes, hours, days became a blur. I do not recall how things went down exactly, but rather the inability to breathe, ringing ears and fuzzy vision; what I now realize was debilitating shock. Karl must have called everyone, as my mom and brother arrived, and sister was on her way. Kaitlyn's friends came to support her, and we eventually made our way to the hospital in deafening quiet; numbness. It's weird how you can be so disconnected and yet still have a negative association to what is around you. I recall how it took 15 months before I could drive by the hospital without feeling nauseous, or the sheer panic of driving Karl up to the same emergency doors for stitches about five years later.

While our world had stopped, the rest of the world continued along at a feverish pace since the long Civic Holiday weekend was upon us. Jeremy had made plans to visit his girlfriend for the weekend to celebrate their first dating anniversary. We thought the world of Pauline (aka P2), besides they were smitten with each other and made a beautiful couple.

Instead of us celebrating the long weekend with friends, we now had a house full of family and friends coming by to support us and help us pick up the pieces. The days involved reminiscing about who Jeremy was as a child, brother, nephew, grandson and friend. We talked about his love for sports – like watching NASCAR, Jacksonville Jaguars, London Knights hockey, the Toronto Blue Jays and Maple Leafs. Jeremy loved playing baseball

and even though he started playing later than most kids, he became one of the top pitchers in his ball league and was highly respected by his teammates, coaches, and officiants.

A few of Jeremy's buddies popped over that long weekend to gift a frame with a collage of their favourite pictures with Jeremy. They also played a few videos that he had created for their private group site. These young men didn't have to share this insight into their 'friendship' world, however we were so grateful, as these videos brought laughter and tears as we watched the goofy antics while memorizing every movement, facial expression and especially his voice that we would never get to experience in-person again. What a special gift! **Miracle Number One.** His friends continue to reach out and even sent flowers on his birthday this year. They will forever miss his laughter, jokes, comradery of iron chef cooking competitions, baseball games and their infamous New Year's Day football games together with Jeremy.

A few weeks after the funeral and celebration of life, the baseball league held a memorial game to honour Jeremy. What I noticed most was how the initial sombre weight of the event, as players signed a banner for our family keepsake, speeches were given by league members and players from the London Major's ball team; transformed into fun and laughter as folks joined united in one of Jeremy's favourite sports. I think Jeremy would have appreciated this sentiment, and his teammates didn't want it to end especially as they took a final team picture around the pitchers' mound with his ball and glove.

We got moved into our new house on August 30th with the help of amazing people. However, changes slowly began to set in. Not all of it was bad, especially hearing the robust laughter of Kaitlyn and her friends in the house again; finally, a small sense of normalcy – **Miracle Number Two.** I would still listen for Jeremy to arrive home, to call out while he scurried upstairs for a shower, or I would automatically select Jeremy's favourite snacks (nibs, fuzzy peaches) while grocery shopping only to return them to the shelf in tears. I realized that I needed help. My red 'Super Mom' cape lay tattered on the floor; I had to say NO and create self-preservation to survive. My husband lost a part of his wife that day along with a stepson. Kaitlyn not only lost her brother but a piece of her mom as I was incapable of supporting her. Instead she was told to be brave for her mom. It hurts to think how isolated she felt, as she had no one who could relate to any of her realities.

The media had frequent updates on the

news and in the paper immediately following his tragedy. And although they had initially announced that two were dead, we learned that it was only Jeremy – **Miracle Number Three.** What happened is the six-person crew had arrived late at the country home to install the large event tent for a wedding that weekend. The bride indicated where the tent was to be placed and the boys unloaded the vans and started installing. It was confirmed there had been no safety training, no supervisor present or inspection of the worksite. The tent was about two thirds erected when the pole they were lifting with a trolley mechanism from underneath the tent canopy, made contact with an overhead hydro line. Of the five young men who sustained electrical shock, one had minor injuries, two were seriously injured, one was critically injured. Jeremy was fatally electrocuted.

Outside folks told me this was my 'new normal' ... and I wanted to throttle somebody. There is nothing normal about your 21-year-old son being killed at his summer job.

August 1, 2013 became a defining date ... our life 'before' Jeremy's death and new life 'after'. However, a workplace tragedy holds other life complications: legal proceedings. Charges were laid nine months after his death, and another nine months passed with court appearances and delays before Jeremy's case was heard. A guilty plea during the 90-minute proceeding ended with a fine. Although this was an important milestone, it would take another 2 ½ years before the Coroner's Inquest was conducted.

Throughout this time, Threads of Life became my second family – **Miracle Number Four.** I was matched with a Volunteer Family Guide (VFG). She walked alongside me, then

prepared me and held my hand throughout both court proceedings. Outside folks told me this was my 'new normal' ... and I wanted to throttle somebody. There is nothing normal about your 21-year-old son being killed at his summer job. I now understood the concept of how one could curl up in a ball on the bed and not get up. Fortunately, my VFG helped me avoid this path, and I now try to reciprocate this support to other moms who find themselves on this journey.

Here is what I have learned over the past (almost) eight years:

- 'Just do the next thing', even when you think you can't. Remember, small steps!
- Grief never ends but it does soften.
- You still have purpose in life – it is out there, just be open to it.
- You can find peace and joy in life again!
Yes, even without your loved one or living with an injury.

For me this means striving to be a better mom, wife, daughter, sibling and friend. Helping others through their grief journey as a VFG and other support systems. Finding passion through the Speakers Bureau program to educate high school, college and university students, along with organizations in our communities – that workplace tragedies are 100 per cent preventable.

Jeremy would have turned 29 this past February, and I wonder how these past eight years would have matured him. He was quiet and somewhat shy until you got to know him, could light up the room with his smile, and friends loved him at social gatherings because they were in for a fun time. He was academically strong; was an antagonizing little brother to Kaitlyn yet admired in his own right. To me, he was a young man with good morals, character, and charisma, that was loving life to the fullest.

As I write this article, it is my 8th Mother's Day without Jeremy, and this journey continues. Yes, it has been difficult, however miracles have risen out of this tragedy, and I am able to balance joy into my life again.



Jeremy loved sports and became a respected pitcher in his league

That was my Bobby

Bullying at work leads to death of great husband and father

by **Brenda Duhaime**

I met my Bobby at his sister Germaine's. Germaine and I had been friends for more than 10 years and I'd never laid eyes on her brother until the spring of 1979. All it took was one look and I was "twitter-pated" with him. Germaine said he was a bad ass and always in trouble and for some reason that made him even more appealing. What girl doesn't want a bad boy?

Bobby came from a family of 11: five sisters and five brothers. He was a twin born minutes before Albert. He always teased his twin saying it took a man to break trail. He loved to tease and make people laugh and he almost always drove his mama crazy. One time at a family function someone said to him you twins don't look alike; he responded by saying "same mom different dad". His mama came unglued and everyone laughed; that was how my Bobby rolled.

He was a kind and generous man who loved to help. He was a heavy equipment operator with his class 1A licence and always did whatever he had to do to bring home a pay cheque.

He was a great dad and in all the years I only ever saw him angry with the kids once – he scolded them once and it was over.

When the kids left home I got my safety tickets and went to work with him in northern Alberta, building the sites and access roads for oil lease properties. I became aware of how talented Bobby was on any piece of equipment from the track hoe to dozer and the grader. He made operating that equipment look like poetry. He was always being called on the radio to come fix what someone else messed up.

Being in the north with Bobby made me fall even more in love with his kind and gentle soul. He spent many of his lunch hours teaching some young person how to operate a piece of



Bobby and his twin brother Albert

equipment so they could better themselves. He taught me how to operate a dozer. I was worried about gouging the ground. His response was there isn't anything you can do to the dirt that you can't fix with dirt. That was my Bobby.

Over the years I suffered from painful shoulder and neck pain and in early January I found out I had a spinal cord injury. I had surgery about a week later and was put on permanent disability.

Bobby was getting more and more frustrated and stressed about being harassed daily.

Bobby wanted to be at home with me and when he saw an ad for a grader operator at a nearby municipality he applied and was hired. The shop and the office for this municipality was about 45 kms from our home so he could be home every evening.

Bobby worked for this municipality for two years without incident and was a favourite with some of the councillors as he knew what he was doing when it came to building and maintaining gravel roads.

One of the councillors was responsible for

the major gravel road leading to several large summer resorts. She wanted Bobby to maintain that gravel road because he knew what he was doing. Never once until the spring of 2017 did I see Bobby come from work stressed.

The fall of 2016 a new reeve was elected, and he wanted to get "his" roads maintained to his liking.

The trouble started Easter weekend of 2017. We were at our daughter's with our whole family and it was snowing hard. There was 30-40 cms of wet heavy snow on the ground and more coming. Bobby got a phone call from the counsellor wondering if Bobby could come and blade the snow off the road because people were having trouble getting through. Bobby couldn't say no so off he went. This road is approximately 20 kms long and towards the north end he pulled over with the grader as there were a lot of cars and trucks behind him wanting to get by. When he pulled over he slid into the ditch becoming stuck. He called the councillor and she came out to the road to assess the problem. She told Bobby to call an area farmer with a tractor. While the farmer was pulling him out, a tire came off the rim making it impossible to move the grader. That great Saskatchewan farmer also gave Bobby a lift back to the shop.

Well it seemed from that weekend to the end of June it rained three to four days a

week, making it almost impossible for the three grader operators to do their jobs. Bobby would get calls as early as 6:00 AM and as late as 10:00 about the condition of the gravel roads. Around the second week in May all the grader operators were put on probation because the reeve said they weren't doing their jobs. Bobby told the reeve and council that they didn't need grader operators; they needed a miracle because you can't grade mud. He was being constantly harassed about the condition of the roads.

The grader operators were called into a meeting and the other two operators were released from probation.

The councillor in charge of the resort road was very agitated. Under the new reeve's orders she was only allowed one grader once a week; prior to this reeve she got two graders twice a week. All this coupled with the wet conditions meant the resort road went to hell. She lived on the far end of the road and drove it daily. The municipal administrator also lived along this road so the two of them seemed to take this out on Bobby. It seemed Bobby was being held responsible for the weather conditions.

Bobby was getting more and more frustrated and stressed about being harassed daily. He asked the safety people at work for help but one of the safety people was the administrator who was also harassing him. The ones causing Bobby to be stressed were asked to stop but it never stopped so he asked occupational health and safety for help and that didn't happen. He asked worker's compensation for help and they said write us a story explaining what has gone on. Bobby and I spent eight hours writing out the details.

Around the end of June Bobby went on short term disability for anxiety, as advised by his doctor. I never found out until after Bobby's death that he was denied coverage by worker's compensation. In August he was asked to attend mediation. He was told all the people involved including the other grader operators would be attending, but when we arrived we were surprised to see that only the reeve was there. Bobby looked at me and said this is going to go sideways. The reeve said he was sick of watching "his" roads go to hell. It was decided that Bobby was going to go back to work the following Monday, August 28. I was to go to Saskatoon with our daughter and our grandson as he was in a hockey camp all week. Bobby said I should go. We left for Saskatoon on Sunday the 27th.

Bobby called me at coffee time on Monday the 28th and said everything was going ok.

On Tuesday Bobby told me a safety meeting

was called and the administrator arrived early and started attacking him about naming her in the occupational health and safety report he filed. He was shocked and left the building until others arrived. We chatted awhile and I encouraged him to tell the other safety officer at work about the verbal attack that morning.

Later that day the administrator called him and told him that he could run but couldn't hide as they had a GPS installed on his grader while he was on stress leave. This call distressed Bobby and in a phone call that evening I encouraged him to take more time off as the doctor had suggested.



Bobby and Brenda with two of their grandkids

The LAST call Bobby made was to the safety officer at work telling him that he wouldn't be at work the next day.

When I never got a call from Bobby by coffee time on the 30th of August I became concerned. I was enroute to the arena with our daughter and grandson and didn't want to cause them any stress so I kept the feeling to myself. After we arrived at the arena I called my sister who lived down the street from our house. When she got there she said all the doors were locked and the curtains drawn. She located our hidden key and found Bobby sleeping on the sofa but she couldn't wake him. I hung up and called 911 and then called her back. I told her to turn on Bobby's phone so I could hear what was going on.

A first responder arrived in minutes. He started working on Bobby and I could hear him yell stay with me Bob. Our daughter asked a mom at hockey camp to keep our grandson so we could go. The ambulance stopped about six times to revive Bobby. They decided to air lift him from North Battleford to the hospital in Saskatoon. By this time my daughter and I were only a few minutes out of North Battleford but we turned around and headed back to Saskatoon.

Bobby remained on the machines keeping

him alive until the scans of his brain showed that there was no brain activity and that there was no hope. I wanted to see if any of his organs could be donated. This process took hours and the verdict was that his organs were too damaged by the overdose of about 100 times a normal dose of his heart medication.

I really don't know how I got the necessary things done, nor do I remember doing some of them.

At the memorial service I had the urge to get up and tell the people a bit about what happened to my Bobby. I couldn't have one more person tell me that he was so selfish for what he did. When I finished I could see people crying and hear sobs. In 38 years living in and around our community was there ever more people than at my Bobby's service?

Several weeks after, I tried to get a lawyer to listen; I tried to get the media to listen. No one listened. I felt defeated.

I did not know that WCB was doing interviews with municipal council members and employees, former council members, former employees and the former reeve.

Later I received a call from WCB stating that the interviews proved Bobby had been bullied, harassed and put under unusual stress in the workplace. Guess what: now people listened. OH&S wanted an interview. CBC Radio did a story about what happened to Bob. When the story went nation-wide I received about 300 messages from people being bullied at work. A young woman from the NWT messaged that she had her death planned that day until she heard the word suicide on the radio and listened to Bobby's story. She said hearing the story made her decide not to die. She was being bullied at work and no one LISTENED.

The municipality appealed the WCB decision and lost all levels of appeal.

Life since has been a whirlwind. I really don't know how I made it this far. If tears could bring my Bobby back he would live forever and if talking about workplace bullying saves one life, Bobby would be good with that. People need to listen, really listen. If any one of the people Bobby asked for help really listened, they would have heard the distress he was going through. But he wasn't taken seriously. There needs to be training for council members. There needs to be a safe way for workers to report bullying.

Bobby was a great man, husband, father, brother, uncle and friend.

THAT WAS MY BOBBY.

For more information on bullying in the workplace, see the CCOHS factsheet, page 6.

What Is Workplace Bullying?

by **Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, CCOHS.ca**

Bullying is usually seen as acts or verbal comments that could psychologically or 'mentally' hurt or isolate a person in the workplace. Sometimes, bullying can involve negative physical contact as well. Bullying usually involves repeated incidents or a pattern of behaviour that is intended to intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate a particular person or group of people. It has also been described as the assertion of power through aggression.

How can bullying affect an individual?

People who are the targets of bullying may experience a range of effects. These reactions include:

- Shock.
- Anger.
- Feelings of frustration and/or helplessness.
- Increased sense of vulnerability.
- Loss of confidence.
- Physical symptoms such as:
 - Inability to sleep.
 - Loss of appetite.
- Psychosomatic symptoms such as:
 - Stomach pains.
 - Headaches.
 - Panic or anxiety, especially about going to work.
 - Family tension and stress.
 - Inability to concentrate.
 - Low morale and productivity.

How can bullying affect the workplace?

Bullying affects the overall "health" of an organization. An "unhealthy" workplace can have many effects. In general, these effects include:

- Increased absenteeism.
- Increased turnover.
- Increased stress.
- Increased costs for employee assistance programs (EAPs), recruitment, etc.
- Increased risk for incidents.
- Decreased productivity and motivation.
- Decreased morale.
- Reduced corporate image and customer confidence.
- Poor customer service.

What can you do if you think you are being bullied?

If you feel that you are being bullied, discriminated against, victimized or subjected to any form of harassment:

DO:

- Firmly tell the person that his or her behaviour is not acceptable and ask them to stop. You can ask a person you trust, such as supervisor or union member to be with you when you approach the person.
- Keep a factual journal or diary of events. Record:
 - The date, time and what happened in as much detail as possible.
 - The names of witnesses.
 - The outcome of the event.

Remember, it is not just the character of the incidents, but intent of the behaviour and the number, frequency, and especially the pattern that can reveal the bullying or harassment.

- Keep copies of any letters, memos, e-mails, etc., received from the person.
- Report the bullying or harassment to the person identified in your workplace policy, your supervisor, or a delegated manager. If your concerns are minimized, proceed to the next level of management.

DO NOT:

- Do not retaliate. You may end up looking like the perpetrator and will most certainly cause confusion for those responsible for evaluating and responding to the situation.

Excerpted from: *Bullying in the Workplace*, <https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/bullying.html>, *OSH Answers*, Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS), December 22, 2020. Reproduced with the permission of CCOHS, 2021.

Moving through the storm

From surge capacity to self-care

by **Emma Morris**, Marketing and Communications Manager, Women in Communications and Technology



Going through the motions is a phrase that we've all heard. Maybe you've experienced it, or seen a loved one experience it. Somehow, in the face of the unimaginable, you're still able to get the everyday things done.

What if going through the motions isn't an ability—but a survival mechanism rooted deep in our subconscious? Surge capacity is a collection of adaptive systems that allow us to “keep going” for short-term survival in acutely stressful situations. It's what helps humans survive natural disasters, but it can also take over after a workplace tragedy, an automatic response to loss and trauma. Particularly if you're a caregiver (of children, of someone with an injury or disease, or of other loved ones), surge capacity might help you be the glue that holds it all together.

But here's the catch to surge capacity: it was only ever designed to help you with short-term survival. You might notice as time passes, that it's harder to go through the motions, to keep calm and carry on. The everyday things feel harder and harder. Or maybe you don't notice it at all, until one day you just can't keep going. This failure, sudden or slow, of surge capacity is what we know as burnout.

We know that a workplace tragedy isn't a short-term situation—it's a forever change. So what is the solution to this burnout?

Whether or not you've experienced this before (or are experiencing it now), there are three steps to starting to move through this storm:

1. Understand your surge capacity systems. How do you keep going when it seems impossible to move forward? Where are the areas of your life that you are able to carry on as normal? Where are the areas that you can't?

2. Learn the signs of burnout: where can you first notice the little signs that are pointing to things maybe not being okay? How does your body react?
3. Take just one action that builds your resilience bank account: the little actions add up. Even if all you can do is one thing that brings you peace (whether that is reading a favourite book, prayer, or time in nature), know that it is enough.

If this resonates with you, you are welcome to join us on July 15th for a FamiliesConnect workshop, Moving Through the Storm: From Surge Capacity to Self Care. We'll explore all this and more, while being a part of one of the most important methods of self-care: community.

If you read this far and you're not sure if this workshop might be right for you: know that you are welcome to come and listen and be a part of our community too. There is no prerequisite for self-care.

prioritize

July is Self-Care Month!

In addition to the FamiliesConnect workshop July 15, don't miss our other resources online – threadsoflife.ca/ self-care



Volunteer Profile

Eleanor Westwood

by **Lorna Catrambone**, Regional Development Coordinator and Manager Volunteer Resources

Eleanor Westwood, Threads of Life's longest-serving board member will retire from the board this summer, after 15 years of service to the organization. Occupational health and safety has been very important to Eleanor, who worked at the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) for more than 25 years.

"I first met Shirley Hickman through our mutual involvement in the creation of the LifeQuilt. From there at a meeting with Friends of the LifeQuilt, Shirley and Paul Kells (two of the founding members of Threads of Life) discussed their interest in creating an organization to support families impacted by workplace tragedy."

For Eleanor, meeting Shirley and Paul, and hearing the stories of those whose loved ones didn't come home, helped balance and provide context to the work and information that she was exposed to at CCOHS.

"The stories of those who didn't come home safely from work impacted me right away. Their stories needed to be shared," she said.

When work was underway to convene the first Board of Directors, Eleanor applied for a position and was welcomed to the board in 2006.

"Deciding to join the board was an easy decision," she recalls. "There weren't a lot of other ways to contribute to the organization at that time, and I definitely knew I wanted to be involved as a volunteer."

When asked what some of those early board meetings were like, Eleanor says "the first board was a great mix of health and safety professionals and family members. We were all very respectful of each other and there was such great energy to help Threads of Life succeed, which was helpful in getting off the ground."

After volunteering for so many years, Eleanor has many memories of her experiences with Threads of Life as the organization grew, but there are three that particularly stand out.

"The unveiling of the LifeQuilt after having been involved with the creation, seeing all the individual fabric squares, and the impact of meeting and working with the families. It's so important to get the message out and it is still a very emotional memory for me."

Eleanor also recalls efforts to launch the Hamilton Steps for Life walk. "It was so exhilarating to get it going. There was such a sense of accomplishment and achievement to see the sea of yellow t-shirts at the park."

Lastly, Eleanor reflected on attending the first ever Atlantic Family Forum as a board member, and then returning for the second Atlantic Family Forum the next year. "It was so powerful to see how far the families had come from the first year to the next and the level



of healing ... the way they found each other and established connections and support."

And what is in the future for Threads of Life? Eleanor is optimistic. "I feel confident in knowing the foundation is really solid, which is evidenced in how well Threads of Life has weathered the storm of COVID-19."

Eleanor also recognizes that the pandemic has resulted in an increased awareness of occupational health and safety. "Everyone knows what PPE is now," she says. "This is an opportunity for Threads of Life to increase awareness and importance of health and safety, increase sensitivity to work-life balance and awareness of mental health issues."

"Threads of Life will continue to grow in different ways," she predicts. "The pandemic has resulted in the increased use of, and comfort with technology. Virtual sessions, such as FamiliesConnect, offer good ways to reach many more families in a timely manner. There are exciting opportunities to connect families online. Technology can't replace in-person events, but in-person may not be viable for all, or is something they can transition to when the time is right for them."

Dedicated volunteers like Eleanor, contribute to the success and sustainability of Threads of Life. We are grateful to Eleanor for her thoughtful leadership and unwavering support.

Threads of Life
believes sharing
your experience of
workplace tragedy
helps you heal.

Learning to
SHARE

Are you ready to share? You could write a reflection on one idea, write a poem, draft a post for our blog (threadsoflife.ca/news), or share your full story as two family members have in this issue. To learn more, email: Susan at shaldane@threadsoflife.ca.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

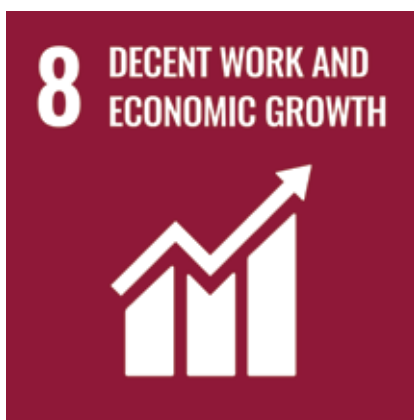
Threads of Life and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

It's been six years since the United Nations General Assembly established the Sustainable Development Goals that were adopted by all 193 United Nations Member States, including Canada.

The goals set a timeline to end poverty, improve health and education, reduce inequality, spur economic growth and address climate change by 2030. There are 17 goals and a total of 169 specific, measurable targets that will help achieve the SDGs.

Globally, there has been considerable activity with respect to achieving the targets, which includes over 3000 events, 1254 publications and 5400 actions taken. Sadly, in recent months progress has slowed due to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The responsibility to achieve these goals falls not just on countries, but on companies, organizations and individuals too. At Threads of Life, our mission and vision align closely with some of the goals and targets:



SDG 8 - Decent Work & Economic Growth Target 8-8:

Protect labour rights and *promote safe and secure working environments* for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants and those in precarious employment.

This fits closely with our mission to help families

heal through a community of support and to *promote the elimination of life-altering workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths*. And our vision to lead and inspire a culture shift as a result of which work-related injuries, illnesses and deaths are morally, socially and economically unacceptable.



SDG 3 - Good Health & Wellbeing - Target 3.6:

By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents. Knowing that the road is a workplace for those in a number of sectors, we recognize the role we can play in supporting this target.

SDG 3 - Good Health and Wellbeing - Target 3.9:

By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination. Exposure to chemicals and pollution in the workplace is a cause of work-related illness and death. Our efforts to raise awareness of the need for prevention of all types of workplace tragedy support this target.

We also recognize the role that volunteering plays in helping to achieve Goal 10 - Reduce Inequalities Within and Among Countries. The following quote was shared during 2019 International Volunteer Day:

“Volunteering provides opportunities for people, particularly those often excluded, to concretely impact their own lives and play a constructive role in their communities by volunteering their time and skills. Through volunteerism, communities around the world often experience strengthened solidarity and inclusion.”

Our volunteers, through their support of others experiencing a workplace tragedy, and the sharing of their personal stories of loss through presentations and written articles, contribute to their own healing, and the healing of others, and make a significant difference in their communities. We are grateful to them for their contribution to the mission and vision of Threads of Life, and the part they play achieving those SDG targets.

WE WALKED Together!

We were together in so many ways this spring, as Steps for Life 2021 rolled out across the country! We were together in our commitment to make the event happen, in spite of all the challenges the pandemic threw at us. We were together in our passion for health and safety. We were together in raising funds and demonstrating support for those affected by workplace tragedy. From coast to coast, whether in our backyards or on the trails, we were one big Steps for Life community! Thanks to our volunteers, participants, sponsors, and donors.



Centre for Research in Occupational Health and Safety (CROSH) team, Sudbury ON: The #CROSHcrew is proud to report that our team raised \$820 for Steps for Life - Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy, which will help support the healing journey of families who have suffered from a workplace fatality, life-altering injury, or occupational disease. Thank you to all who donated!

Pictured: CROSH team member Carolyn Dignard joined in Steps for Life with her nephew Levi.

Supporting a cause that is near and dear to my heart today. This is my 6th year participating in Steps for Life. I've met so many amazing people and made many connections along the way. Today we walk to remember and educate on the importance of workplace safety.

Pictured: Penny Glover, Calgary AB.



Shawn Reilly, Saint John NB: Throughout my career in health and safety I have seen the devastating impact that workplace injuries have on those injured, and their families. I have lost friends and family. I have made 'that call' to a family member more than once. I believe that having a network through Threads of Life to help cope with these tragedies is a critical need in Canada.

Pictured: Shawn and Nualla Reilly during the opening ceremonies for Steps for Life Saint John.

KLTP team, Vancouver BC: At KLTP we pride ourselves for the way we work safe. Our days start with safety and end with safety. Our management team supports our field personnel to make safe decisions for each and every task they do. Our KLTP personnel are a team and also consider one another family. Because of this we are always looking out for each other. One of our sayings is "see it, say it". This means having the courage to intervene and look out for each other ... This is the 2nd year that KLTP has supported the Steps for Life event ... for every donation made, a yellow boot print will be posted in our offices and lunchrooms and we hope to colour the walls YELLOW in support of families who have been affected.



Together!

WE MET OUR GOAL

Our fundraising goal for 2021 was set at \$450,000, and together we all watched the Steps for Life fundraising thermometer tick higher and higher. By end of Steps for Life, thanks to fundraisers, donors and sponsors, we had exceeded our goal, and then some! The money raised will ensure that families struggling in the aftermath of work-related fatalities, life-altering injuries and occupational disease will have access to free peer support programs. Thanks to all of you, they'll also have opportunities to use their voices to prevent future tragedies. win-win-win!

You lit it up!

On top of the sunny yellow shirts across the country, you also lit up social media with your shares about Steps for Life 2021. We recorded 799 mentions of Steps for Life or our hashtag #WeWalkTogether this spring. Thanks for all the wonderful photos!



TEAM CHALLENGE WINNERS

NATIONAL TEAM Winner	KLTP	Led by Leah-Ann Maybee	Vancouver
NATIONAL INDIVIDUAL Winner	Dayle Biggin		St. John's
Atlantic Canada TEAM Winner	Dragon Lady	Led by Dayle Biggin	St. John's
Atlantic Canada INDIVIDUAL Winner	Shelly O'Dell		Saint John
Central Canada TEAM Winner	Unifor National	Led by Ken Bondy	Toronto
Central Canada INDIVIDUAL Winner	Diana Devine		Ottawa
Western Canada TEAM Winner	Sun Valley Gold	Led by Morgan Schmidt	Vancouver
Western Canada INDIVIDUAL Winner	Ceilidh Whelan		Edmonton
TEAM - Spirit Award Winner	Wright Family	Led by Jennifer, Brian, Emma & Eric	Central

Coming Events

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

Western Virtual Family Forum
September 24-26, 2021

Central Virtual Family Forum
October 22-24, 2021

We look forward to in-person events resuming soon! Stay tuned for announcements on training and event plans for 2022.

SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER!

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



FAMILIESCONNECT
THREADS OF LIFE WORKSHOP SERIES

Threads of Life offers our series of on-line workshops, **FAMILIES CONNECT**.

<https://threadsoflife.ca/programs/>

Each month there's a new topic, led by knowledgeable facilitators and joined by a supportive community.

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



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 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 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