



Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support

Finding a passion for injury prevention

Bill Bowman was only 19 years old when his life changed forever. He had just found a summer job at a rail car manufacturing plant in Hamilton that paid three times what he had previously made as a maintenance man.

On that fateful day he was tasked to work with a small brake press, adjusting the gauge with one hand and holding a wrench with the other. He accidentally stepped on the foot pedal which activated the machine he was working on – instantly crushing his left arm and severing it from his body. A quick-thinking co-worker applied a tourniquet, likely saving Bill's life. But despite multiple attempts to reattach his arm over the next six weeks, his left arm was eventually permanently amputated.

Although the loss of his arm was traumatic and life-changing, Bill considers himself one of the lucky ones saying, "I was fortunate to have extremely supportive family and friends." This included his Uncle Jim, a WWII veteran who was himself an amputee as a result of stepping on a landmine during the war. Uncle Jim always encouraged Bill to see the good in life – a lesson he took to heart, and one that helped him press on after his injury. But Bill knew that not everyone who is affected by a workplace injury has the strong support system he had, which inspired him to partner with Threads of Life shortly after it was first formed in 2003.

As a national Canadian charity, Threads of Life counts on the leadership of companies and organizations committed to health and safety and to Canadian families. They assist by:

- spreading the word to people who need support,
- increasing participation in Threads of Life programs and events,
- facilitating volunteerism, and
- growing Threads of Life's funding.

Today, Bill is still an active member of Threads of Life as a volunteer family guide and a member of the [Threads of Life volunteer speaker's program](#). He is just as passionate about injury prevention as he was nearly two decades ago and is showing no signs of slowing down. He explains, "Sadly, many workers and their families and friends continue to experience a devastating loss as a result of a workplace injury; however, they have not had the childhood experiences and mentor which definitely aided my recovery. This is why Threads of Life is so important for those who are beginning or continuing their journey of healing and therefore my involvement will continue as long as I am able."

[Read more of Bill's story on the Threads of Life blog.](#)

You can help people like Bill find the support they need. [Learn more about how to get involved](#), or contact Threads of Life Director of Development Lorna Catrambone at 289-651-2988 or lcatrambone@threadsoflife.ca

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