

threads of life

VOL.23 NO.1 SPRNG 2025

PREVENTION | SUPPORT | PARTNERSHIP

Volunteers make waves!

The theme for National Volunteer Week this spring is 'Volunteers Make Waves' - what a perfect reflection of Threads of Life's volunteers! Every tragedy makes wide-reaching ripples, but by giving their time and energy, our volunteers make waves for good!



Volunteer Courtney J. Gauvin welcomes visitors to the Threads of Life trade show booth

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Peter Deines



From Day One, Threads of Life has been powered by volunteers. Today we have well over 300 volunteers in a variety of roles, making waves of healing and culture change across Canada. April 27 to May 3 will be volunteer week and Threads of Life will honour our incredible volunteers – but really we honour and appreciate them every week of the year for the work they do as peer listeners, fundraisers, speakers, organizers, and all-round ambassadors. As you read these pages, notice all the mentions of volunteers! Threads of Life couldn't work without them.

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Introducing!

Threads of Life's

NEW

Executive Director

Dear Threads of Life Community,

It is an honour to introduce myself as your new Executive Director. I am deeply grateful to join this incredible organization and build upon the legacy that Shirley Hickman and the team have nurtured over the past 20+ years. Our mission—to support families affected by workplace tragedies and advocate for the prevention of life-altering workplace injuries, illnesses, and deaths—has profoundly shaped my life.

In November 2017, my father, Bot Gutierrez, a veteran mining surveyor, was tragically killed on the job, struck by mobile mining equipment during a routine shift underground. Overwhelmed by grief, I struggled to find support—until I discovered Threads of Life. Through the compassionate support of a Volunteer Family Guide, I began to heal. At my first Family Forum in 2018, I realized I wasn't alone. I found a community where I felt safe to remove my "mask"—a community that quickly became family. That experience changed everything and fueled my determination to ensure no one else has to navigate this journey alone. I knew I had to get involved.

Since 2019, I have actively volunteered with Threads of Life—serving on the Steps for Life planning committee, facilitating Family Forum workshops, sharing stories as a speaker



Eugene Gutierrez

and through video production, and offering peer support as a Volunteer Family Guide, offering the same peer support that was vital to my healing. Each role deepened my appreciation for Threads of Life's impact and strengthened my desire to contribute even more.

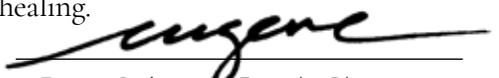
With over 18 years of experience in creative strategy, marketing, leadership, and relationship-building, I bring diverse expertise to this role. But more importantly, through my own experience of workplace tragedy, I understand firsthand what our family members go through, and that personal connection fuels my passion for ensuring Threads of Life continues to grow and reach more people who need us.

The growth of our organization is both inspiring and bittersweet. While it is heartbreaking that more families need support, we are grateful they have found a place of understanding and healing with us. Thanks to the dedication of our volunteers,

partners, and the leadership of Shirley and the Board of Directors, we are well positioned to continue providing the care and guidance our members need.

Looking ahead, I am committed to ensuring Threads of Life remains strong and continues to evolve—embracing new progressive ideas, modern technology and tools, and outreach strategies to better serve our community and tell our collective story nationwide. As the world changes, we will adapt, always keeping our core mission at heart.

I look forward to meeting many of you and hearing your stories in the days ahead. In the meantime, I am working closely with Shirley and the team to ensure a smooth transition. Thank you for welcoming me into this role. I am honoured to walk this journey with you and continue building our community of hope and healing.


Eugene Gutierrez Executive Director

A Season to give THANKS

by **Shirley Hickman**

For more than two decades, I have been blessed to have the support of my family, other families, health and safety partner organizations and committed employers to lead Threads of Life. My personal journey began March 23, 1996, when our 20-year-old son Tim went to work and never came home. Our family, like yours, was devastated by workplace tragedy. That love gave me the energy to try my best to make a difference.

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to listen to so many of you share your journey, and met so many committed individuals, employers and organizations wanting



Shirley Hickman

to make a difference to prevent future tragedies. I have felt well supported and very blessed. My circle of friends has grown. Together we have been on a journey and I know collectively you are making a difference to the landscape of workplace safety.

My personal next season will also be a time of change. Now at the age of 76, is my time to retire and

engage in a few things on my other list. Those who know me, know how blessed I feel to spend time with our son, Michael, daughter-in-law, Sandra and granddaughters, Hailey and Jocelyn. I look forward to developing our family tree, some quilting, continuing to volunteer and of course, knitting. Of course we will always have tears of love. Tim is a part of our lives – always in our heart.

Threads of Life has amazing volunteers, committed community supporters and great staff. The organization is well positioned for the next season.

I have handed over the executive director wand to Eugene Gutierrez and know that working together, Threads of Life will continue to grow and to be there for families when they most need a safe place to land.

I thank you for your ongoing support. Together we work towards our mission and vision that all workers come home well and safe at the end of their shift.

Coming up!

FamiliesConnect online workshops are a chance to learn and connect with others who are also living with the effects of work-related serious injury, illness or death. Check the Threads of Life website for details and to register. Here are some upcoming workshops:

- **The Heart of Healing: A course in emotional recovery**
4 part series April 3, 10, 17 & 24 8pm Atlantic, 7pm Eastern, 4pm Pacific
- **Ask A Therapist About Grief or Trauma: Q & A**
May 21, 7 p.m. Atlantic, 6 p.m. Eastern, 3 p.m. Pacific
- **Learning to Share - the value of sharing your story**
June 18 at 7pm Atlantic, 6pm Eastern, 3pm Pacific



Day of Mourning

Day of Mourning has always been an important observance for those directly affected by workplace tragedy, but it is becoming recognized more and more by people and companies who have a heart for health and safety. This year, in addition to sharing some of our members' stories and providing a place for you to honour your experiences and loved ones, Threads of Life will again host a brief online ceremony and candle-lighting. We ask you to register in advance for this and we will send you a link for the Zoom event. Watch our social media channels and website for the registration opening April 14.

Wilfred Hovius and the Dresden Tragedy

by **Eric Philpott**

Wilfred had everything to live for. He had just turned 19 and was beginning to taste the freedom of young adulthood. The job he and his father were working on would probably take six months to complete, and maybe, just maybe, he would be able to return to school. Wilfred still dreamed of becoming a doctor one day. He had been an excellent student, even with the challenge of a new language and having to borrow textbooks from a neighbour. But while he was still 15, he had to leave school to help support the family.

Like many Dutch immigrants in the 1950s the Hovius family's first years in Canada had been difficult. In 1953, they exchanged a modest but comfortable life in the Netherlands for one of poverty in Canada. In 1955, after some tough years in Cornwall, they moved to Aylmer, Ontario where there was more work. Things had gradually improved and by 1957, both Wilfred and his father had found well-paying jobs in construction, and his mother and siblings were earning money harvesting tobacco.

On August 1, 1957, Wilfred and Enne travelled with a small crew of Dutch Canadians to Dresden, Ontario, where they began work on a new waterworks project. Dresden was 120 kilometers from Aylmer so they would be staying at the site, only returning home on weekends. The upside, though, was that they could



Wilfred (left) along with other workers at the Dresden site

work late each day and make lots of overtime.

In Dresden, the first task was construction of the pumping station beside the Sydenham River, which involved excavating from the top of the riverbank to a depth of 35 feet.

The workers observed all of this with concern. They knew that once it had been excavated to the correct depth, they would have to go into the pit to square it by hand.

At first a power shovel did all of the digging, but progress was slow. The earth was quite soft below ten feet, so there were several “slips” in which parts of the pit wall collapsed. The fallen material had to be cleaned out, creating delays.

The workers observed all of this with concern. They knew that once it had been excavated to the correct depth, they would have to go into the pit to square it by hand. The site engineer, a young Englishman, was also concerned. He requested soil testing to confirm whether the excavation

was sufficiently stable, but the contractor didn't act, even after the request was put in writing.

On their second weekend home, Enne paced out 35 feet to show the family how deep the excavation was. Wilfred confided to his sister that he was not looking forward to going down into that hole. The other men, too, told their wives about the dangers. Jan Oldewening's wife urged him to call in sick. He had only recently been hospitalized for ulcers, and wasn't fully recovered, so it would have been justified.

Unfortunately, like many immigrants then and now, the men needed the work, so early on Monday morning, August 12, they headed back to Dresden. Wilfred's sister Theresa remembers their father hugging their mother to say goodbye and then turning around to give her a second hug before leaving.

The next day, the excavation reached formation level and the men were sent in. A photo, taken by the site engineer, shows there was no shoring to hold back the earth. On the river side, the pit was 15 feet deep, but the back wall of the pit rose up a full 35 feet to the top of the bank.

On August 14, the men arrived early, finding that there had been another slip. About a truckload of earth had fallen into the pit. They had cleared it out quickly and began assembling the formwork for the base of the structure. Then they started placing and tying a thicket of steel reinforcement bars. They were working fast. By lunchtime their foreman, Dirk Ryksen, decided that they would be able to pour the foundation that day. The first load arrived at 4pm. The men had to improvise a crane to swing the buckets of concrete from the mixer over to a trough where they poured the concrete down into the pit.

The second load of concrete arrived at 6pm and the men got right to work. Along with the five Aylmer men, and their foreman, the work crew included two locals, both also recent Dutch immigrants. Henry Vanderveen lived a few doors down from the job site. His wife served the men their meals. The other was Harry Okkema, who was 19 years old, like Wilfred. Harry and Wilfred worked together and chatted when they had time to, “mostly about cars and girls,” as Harry recalls.

Around 6:30, Harry was called home for dinner while the others continued working. That saved Harry's life.

At 7pm, when the men were nearly finished, the entire east wall of the pit collapsed. It happened so fast there was no time to escape, but Wilfred and his father almost reached the top of the northwest corner of the pit before they, too, were covered in the heavy wet clay. Dirk Ryksen, their foreman, was standing on the edge of the formwork, speaking with the contractor, Alvin Keillor when the cave-in happened. Ryksen was pulled into the pit where he lost his life, along with his men. Keillor, who was buried up to his knees, was brief-

ly trapped, but he survived, traumatized by what he had witnessed.

Word of the cave-in spread rapidly, and many townspeople tried to save the men, but it was too late and the hoped for rescue operation turned into the grim task of recovering the bodies. Wilfred was the second one they found, wrapped in his father's arms. In all, six men died that day.



Wilfred Hovius in the summer of 1957 at age 19.

The cave-in was headline news across Canada and the Netherlands, and investigations were launched quickly, but what became of them is unknown today. Although there had been no inspections, no soil tests, and no shoring of any kind, a Coroner's Inquest ruled the deaths accidental and the contractor was acquitted in a trial.

Although it was Ontario's worst workplace tragedy, the story disappeared quickly. Just three years later, in 1960 when the Ontario government launched a Royal Commission to investigate workplace safety across the province, the Dresden disaster was not even mentioned.

I only found out about it because my (late) father was the site engineer. A few years ago, my mother told me the story for the first time. When I looked for more information, I

couldn't find anything to show it had even happened, but in 2020, we found my father's diary, photos, and drawings documenting everything.

I made it my mission to reconstruct what happened and in 2023, I started work on a documentary, “Dresden 1957.” I couldn't believe that a story like this could be allowed to disappear. Of course, those families have never forgotten. 20 children lost their fathers that day, and when I started this project, 15 were still alive. Meeting them has been emotional. I very much want them to see their story told at last.

Wilfred Hovius will forever be 19. The promise that his life held could only be fulfilled by his sisters and brothers, but I'm certain he would be proud to see them today. He is buried in the Aylmer Cemetery next to his father Enne (39), Jan Bremer (43), Jan Oldewening (45), and Hendrik Drenth (58). A sixth plot had been purchased for Dirk Ryksen (37), but he was buried in Woodland Cemetery in Byron, London, near where his wife and young son lived.

I couldn't believe that a story like this could be allowed to disappear. Of course, those families have never forgotten.

Since starting on this project, I've come to realize that there is still very little public awareness of workplace tragedies. Unfortunately, that may be especially true of trench collapses, which are still happening today. I hope that by telling the forgotten story of the Dresden cave-in, we can make a small contribution towards greater awareness, both of workplace safety, and of those who have lost loved ones.

You can learn more about our documentary project at:

www.Dresden1957.com

YOUR HEALING TOOLKIT



Why is this tool helpful after a workplace tragedy?

After you've experienced a workplace tragedy, it can be helpful to find activities that get you out of your mind-- and into your body. You'll often hear runners say that going for a run helps them to "clear their head." It can also help to have an achievable goal that you can reach through following a step-wise plan that involves setting aside time to do something just for you.

How can I get started?

Talk to your doctor before starting any new exercise program. If your doctor says you're ok to start running, here's a list to get you going:

- **Proper running shoes and clothing for the conditions you'll be running in.** Talk to someone who runs in your area, or go to a running store and talk to them about their best recommendations.
- **Solo or supported?** Runners often fall in one of two camps: they love running by themselves and have no interest in running with a group, or they love running with friends! If you think the support will help you, look into local running groups. A supportive run buddy or group can help a lot! If you have no interest in running with others, just set the time in your schedule to hit the pavement yourself.
- **Walk to run.** Most new runners follow a walk/run interval method to start running. As you progress, your walk intervals get shorter and your run intervals get longer. Walking is part of the process!

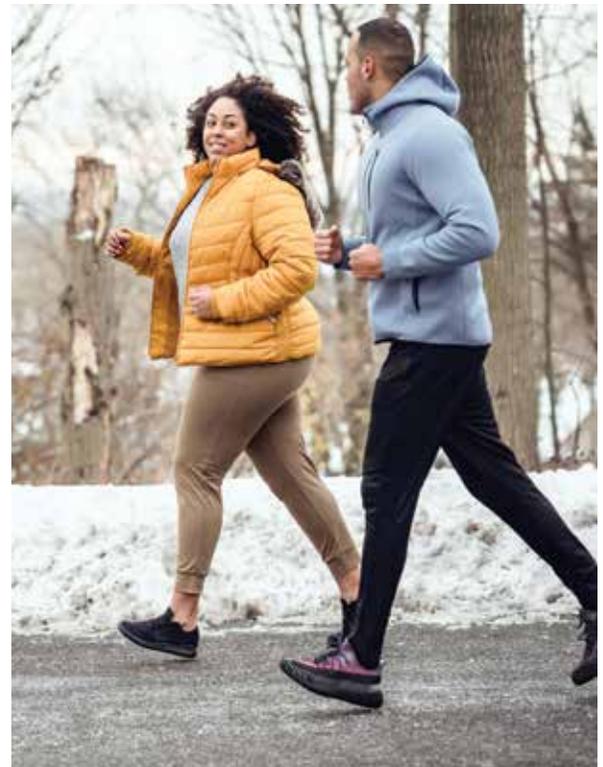


Photo by AbsolutVision on Unsplash

Free Resources

- There are lots of free 5K apps out there. One good one that's available on iOS or Android is **Just Run: Zero to 5K (+10K)** (choose the 5K option to start!)
- Many runners like to track their runs and keep track of their progress using phone or watch apps such as Strava or Runkeeper (free versions available!)

Profile: Thunder Bay Steps for Life committee



Thunder Bay planning committee in 2009

In the early years of Steps for Life, Thunder Bay was one of only three communities hosting a walk. Their event started in 2007 and continued until 2011. They were “a small committee of passionate and dedicated safety folks,” says Mika Lees, current Thunder Bay planning committee co-chair. The Steps for Life walk made a return to Thunder Bay in 2020 and has been a growing event since.

When they re-established the walk in Thunder Bay, they had small numbers due to the pandemic but went ahead thanks to the efforts of an enthusiastic planning committee who walked anyway. The walk has grown from under 50 walkers, to an impressive 161 walkers in 2024.

The 2025 committee, which stands at 13, has members from the original 2007 group and adds to its membership every year. Randi Monteith, one of the original volunteers from 2007, continues to be an active contributing member. Randi and Mika were inspired to get involved when they heard Shirley Hickman, Threads of Life’s founder, share the story of her son Tim’s tragedy. At that time, Randi and Mika were both involved in delivering Young Worker Awareness Presentations (YWAP) to high school students and wanted to help make a difference for families. “It was a pleasure to meet Shirley on multiple occasions and contribute to an absolutely vital organization that helps so many people when they or a family member have suffered a tragedy at work,” says Randi.

In 2019 Heather Bouley, current Thunder Bay planning committee co-chair, heard Bob Quarrell, a Threads of Life speaker telling the story of how he lost his son to a workplace tragedy. She was moved as her own son had recently been injured at work and she realized “how lucky he was to still be here.” The speaker shared that the last walk in Thunder Bay was in 2011 and Heather told her husband, “I am bringing this walk back”. Heather met

by **Georgina Murphy**, Regional Development Coordinator

Mika Lees and Rob Popien who leveraged their connections, and they collectively brought the walk back for 2020 with supporters inspired by the mission of Threads of Life.

Mika reflects “Every walk has had something special about it. We overcame the challenges of COVID, and our committee walked anyhow our first year back, spacing each family unit 30 minutes apart but still gathering at the Carpenter’s Hall (even though it was closed) and Heather proudly bugled The Last Post.”

“I have fond memories of our first four years of walks (2007-2011) with our children being so young, all our families coming together,” Mika adds. “Randi’s parents were our original course marshals!” Mika’s daughter Scotia is now a member of the planning committee, and her infant grandson (appropriately named Walker) is an honorary member who often attends the in-person planning meetings.

A new committee member in 2025, Brittany Mackett, combines her professional experience and personal drive to support families impacted by workplace tragedies. “As a WSIB employee, I have seen the devastation of workplace tragedies,” she says. “I volunteer for Threads of Life as I am extremely passionate about the work they do. No one should leave for work and not come home.”

The committee members are active volunteers in many facets of their community, including representation from local utilities, businesses and unions as well as health and safety organizations. The dedication of this committee, those who have been there since 2007 and those who have joined since, makes the Steps for Life walk a huge success in Thunder Bay. They have generated awareness in the community, created a gathering of walkers each year who are supportive of the cause and have raised over \$80,000 for Threads of Life over the years.

2025 Members Ani Dava, Brittany Mackett, Bruce Kruger, Heather Bouley, Kris DeGiacomo, Laura Zaina, Mika Lees, Randi Monteith, Robert Popien, Sandie Kulchar, Scotia Biloski, Terry Bochkko, Tracy Apperly.



Steps for Life Thunder Bay committee in 2024



Donors like you: **Betty Evans** by **Bailey Dunyo**, Marketing Coordinator

Betty's journey with Threads of Life began when she came across a booth promoting the Steps for Life fundraising walk in downtown Calgary back in 2013. It was there that she first learned about the organization's mission to support families affected by workplace tragedies. Drawn in by her own personal loss—her son's tragic accident in 2008 in Australia—Betty found solace in the community offered by Threads of Life.

Betty recalls, "After speaking with a volunteer, I signed up to walk that year. It was so consoling to meet people who knew and understood my loss."

Becoming a member of the Tapestry of Hope

Betty was deeply moved by the understanding and support she received from others who shared similar experiences. This sense of community inspired her to deepen her involvement. While she had been previously donating twice a year, Betty decided to become a recurring monthly donor to ensure ongoing support for others in similar situations.

She explains, "The work that Threads of Life does is so important and I benefited so greatly from participating in the Steps of Life walks and Family Forums, I wanted to ensure others could have the support I had."

An "immeasurable" impact

Threads of Life's impact, according to Betty, is immeasurable for those who have experienced a workplace tragedy. She shares, "Having the opportunity to share and spend time with others experiencing the devastation that comes as a result of workplace safety accidents is so instrumental in rebuilding the life and livelihood of people living with the consequences of workplace tragedy."

From the factory floor to the tower floor

Through her participation in the Tapestry of Hope, Betty hopes to contribute to a future in which Threads of Life continues to grow and flourish. She also recognizes that

when it comes to workplace safety, there is still much work to be done.

"The recent State of Safety report that Threads of Life published highlights the need for a greater understanding of what 'workplace safety' really means." Betty continues, "We need to continue to make sure safety is a top priority."

A beacon of hope

Betty's dedication, stemming from her own personal tragedy, is a testament to the transformative power of community support in times of hardship – support which she found in Threads of Life. For her, Threads of Life represents more than just an organization—it's a beacon of hope and resilience for families navigating the aftermath of workplace tragedies.

Through her participation in the Tapestry of Hope, she aims to have this support spread to more families who need it. "I want to ensure others could have the support I had. If it were up to me, Threads of Life would be a household name."

For more information about the Tapestry of Hope or to become a member, visit <https://threadsoflife.ca/donate/>



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

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 family members have in this issue. To learn more, email: Susan at shaldane@threadsoflife.ca.

Workplace NL: A shared commitment

by **Lorna Catrambone**,
Director of Development

For Threads of Life, growth has been a consistent, measured, sustained effort. It has taken the support and trust of some key organizations across Canada to ensure that we continue to move forward in fulfilling our mission and vision.

Workplace NL is high among this group of organizations who support all aspects of our work in Newfoundland and Labrador, to the benefit of both our organizations, but mostly to the benefit of families in Newfoundland and Labrador who are experiencing a workplace tragedy.

“We are proud to sponsor and support Threads of Life,” said Ann Martin, CEO, WorkplaceNL. “At WorkplaceNL, we speak to families dealing with workplace tragedy and loss every day. We see and feel their grief – and every interaction with Threads of Life is a reminder of the importance of the work we do. Learning about the far-reaching impacts a life-changing injury or illness has on families and communities drives us to stay committed to preventing workplace injury.”

The relationship began way back in 2011, with WorkplaceNL offering to donate to the St. John’s Steps for Life Walk. Steps for Life had come to Newfoundland and Labrador the year before as walks were expanding across Canada, offering participation and sponsorship opportunities at a unique occupational health and safety focused event.

Workplace NL continued to offer financial support of Steps for Life, and then began to find other ways to contribute. For example, in 2015, Workplace NL decided to donate to Threads of Life in lieu of mailing Christmas cards.

In 2016, WorkplaceNL formalized their commitment to Threads of Life by entering into a multi-year funding agreement that would provide significant financial



Workplace NL's team at the 2024 St. John's Steps for Life walk

support for the delivery of Threads of Life core programs to families in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Of equal importance was their effort to share information about Threads of Life’s programs with the workers and families who have submitted claims with their organization in the aftermath of a workplace injury, illness or fatality. With their help, more families in the province are connecting with us to access our programs and receive support on their journey of healing. The WorkplaceNL team have also regularly invited a member of our Speaker’s Bureau to share their personal story at staff meetings.

When asked to reflect on Threads of Life’s relationship with Workplace NL, retiring Executive Director and Founder Shirley Hickman shared this: “At Threads of Life we are guided by our vision statement, to lead and inspire a culture shift as a result of which work-related injuries, illness and deaths are morally, socially and economically unacceptable. We know we can only hope to achieve this vision by working hand-in-hand with like-minded partners, like Workplace NL. WorkplaceNL demonstrates their support for our work by supporting family members to attend family forums, providing education to their staff and to the community, and encouraging participation in annual Steps for Life events. Threads of Life is grateful for this strong partnership, and we are proud to align with WorkplaceNL’s vision to ensure workers have a safe and healthy workplace.

Introducing David your 2025 national Steps for Life spokesperson

It's a very isolating feeling, being a 16-year-old seriously injured at your summer job. All your friends are working, playing, and going to parties while your life is suddenly made up of hospitals, surgery and therapy.

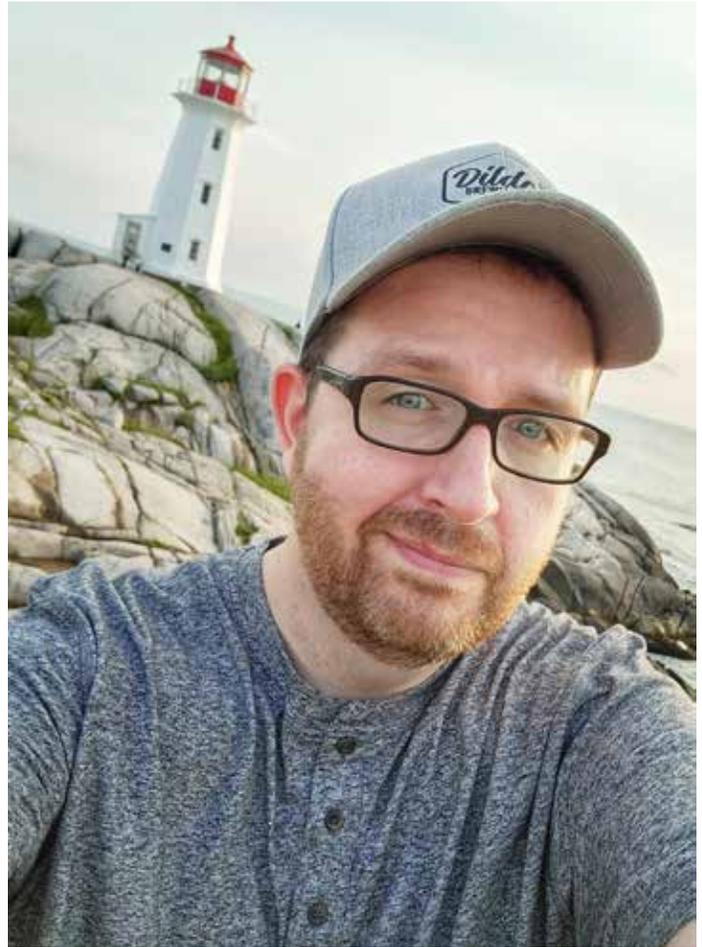
That was the world David Collins found himself in when he was injured just weeks into his summer job at a resort on Prince Edward Island. Today, David is a Threads of Life member and volunteer speaker. This spring, he will serve as the national spokesperson for Steps for Life-Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy.

When David was 16, he was working in the resort's kitchen – his dream was to become a chef – and at the end of their shift, he and another young worker took the resort's heavy duty golf cart to run the garbage out to the dumpster. Untrained and unsupervised, they were doing doughnuts with the cart when David fell out and the cart came around and struck him before the driver could stop. David was paralyzed with catastrophic injuries to his spinal cord.

Over the next years, David re-learned how to walk and underwent intensive physiotherapy. He still lives with partial paralysis and chronic pain.

As an adult, David found Threads of Life. He had already been sharing his personal experience to promote safety, particularly for young workers, and joining the speakers bureau was a logical step.

“Since my injury, I've come a long way in my journey of healing and growth,” he says. “While there have been challenges, being part of Threads of Life has provided me with invaluable support and a sense of purpose. Today, I feel more empowered and hopeful, knowing that I can make a positive impact by advocating for workplace safety and supporting others who are going through similar experiences. It's a continuous journey, but I'm grateful for the progress I've made and the community that has been with me every step of the way.”



David Collins, Steps for Life national spokesperson for 2025

Part of that journey, now, is Steps for Life which David appreciates for the way it “brings communities together to support families affected by workplace tragedies.”

“By raising awareness and funds,” he adds, “we help ensure that those who have experienced loss, injury or occupational disease receive the support they need to heal and rebuild their lives. It's a powerful reminder that safety at work is everyone's responsibility, and together, we can make a difference.”



Steps for Life is a 5-km route. We want everyone to be safe, but beyond that, there are no rules. You can walk, wheel or run (see the ‘How to run a 5k’ feature on page 6 if you'd like to try that!). And for those who have mobility challenges, you can still be part of Steps for Life! Do as much of the walk route as you can, or simply come on site, cheer on others and participate in all the other activities that make up a Steps for Life event. Whether you walk or not, you're still part of the Threads of Life family and we want to see you on walk day!

NEW FLAGS on the Steps for Life map

Steps for Life flags will fly in new locations this spring, as local volunteers work hard to bring events to their communities. Airdrie AB and Kelowna BC will host their first-ever Steps for Life-Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy events. Welcome to the Steps for Life club! And three communities – Fredericton NB, Windsor-Essex Region ON and Sault Ste. Marie ON will bring back walks after a number of years’ absence. Thanks to all the volunteers for making this happen!

... and longtime friends!

At the other end of the spectrum, another community joins the 10+ year club, having launched their first Steps for Life walk in 2015. Thank you Peace Region-Grande Prairie, for your loyal support for workers and families affected by workplace tragedy. In all, there will be 32 community Steps for Life walks from coast to coast this spring, plus numerous company events and walks for families and teams. If you don’t live near one of the in-the-park Steps for Life events, feel free to join our National Online Event and be part of the Steps for Life movement. Learn more at stepsforlife.ca

Leading from the back (of a Steps for Life T-shirt)

Sponsors share their stamp of commitment to workplace health and safety

Each spring, dozens of community-minded organisations and companies demonstrate their commitment to workplace health and safety for their staff and communities. We see colleagues banding together in a shared vision of prevention and support for workers and families who are living through the devastation of a workplace tragedy. We walk together so that no one walks alone.

Sponsorship is one of the ways organisations lend their support to Steps for Life – Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy. The funds raised through sponsorship and donations to Steps for Life each year fund Threads of Life’s family support services for individuals and families healing after a work-related fatality, life-altering injury or occupational disease. Because of you, these programs and services are available at zero cost to families already



struggling through the financial repercussions of a workplace tragedy.

And Steps for Life’s sponsors also have a contagious commitment to workplace safety, carrying the messages of Steps for Life back into the workplace. Each one has chosen to demonstrate their commitment to preventing workplace tragedies and supporting individuals and families after such a loss. To see all the local sponsors supporting your community Steps for Life event, visit your community page at stepsforlife.ca. Here are the organizations supporting Steps for Life at the national level.

NATIONAL SPONSORS



Upcoming Events

Families Connect online workshops threadsoflife.ca/familiesconnect

- **The Heart of Healing: A course in emotional recovery** 4-part series April 3-24
- **Ask A Therapist About Grief or Trauma: Q & A** Wednesday, May 21 at 3pm Pacific, 6pm Eastern, 7pm Atlantic
- **Learning to Share - the value of sharing your story** Wednesday, June 18 at 7pm Atlantic, 6pm Eastern, 3pm Pacific

Steps for Life-Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy www.stepsforlife.ca

- April 27-May 10 in communities across Canada

Atlantic Family Forum www.threadsoflife.ca

- May 30-June 1, Oak Island Resort & Conference Centre, Western Shore, Nova Scotia

SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER!

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

To Donate



How to reach us

Toll-free: 1-888-567-9490
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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 injury 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.

Become a thread in our Tapestry of Hope!



If you'd like to become a Threads of Life monthly donor, please visit www.threadsoflife.ca/donate or call our office at 888-567-9490.

The Tapestry of Hope is our new club for monthly donors. When you give monthly to Threads of Life, you provide sustainable, predictable funding to support those affected by workplace tragedy. It's not just a donation; it's a commitment to building a safety net of compassion and understanding, ensuring that no family has to face their journey alone.