



Young workers @RISK

Ahh, spring. For many, it's about new life; new beginnings. For students and young people those new beginnings are often connected to work. This is the time of year when graduates go searching for that first "real" job and students look for the perfect work to fill their bank accounts and their resumes. In this issue we document the devastating consequences when young workers are not safe in those jobs.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Bill Stunt



As the weather warms and the days lengthen many young people begin the search for summer employment. For many it's their first exposure to the working world. It's a time full of promise and excitement. It's also a time to remind ourselves of the particular peril young people face in the work world. Proportionally, young workers

are more vulnerable to workplace hazards that lead to injury, illness or death. This is something I know only too well. Our eldest son was critically injured while at work at a summer job. Our family's life was forever changed as a result. In this issue of our newsletter we'll take a closer look at the vital issue of workplace safety for the young. As always, you'll also find family members' stories, profiles of volunteers and informative articles about grief and loss. You'll also read updates about Steps for Life. I hope you find something here to help you on your journey.

LEARNING THE WORKINGS OF A FAMILY CHANGED FOREVER

Adam Keunen was killed in his first week at a high school co-op placement

by Elaine Keunen

September of 2014, I had been a critical care nurse in a busy neuro-trauma intensive care unit for 22 years. I had been with many families over the years whose loved one was going to have life-altering injuries or was going to die from their injuries/illnesses. Being relatively naive and uneducated on the long-term effects of grief, I just assumed that they would be sad for a while but eventually their lives would return to normal. I have learned that karma has a nasty way of showing you reality and on September 26th, 2014 I got the hardest lesson of my life when my 17-year-old son Adam was tragically killed at the end of his first week as a co-op student in an auto recycling facility.

Adam Richard Keunen was born May 11, 1997. The first born of my twin sons. These beautiful blonde boys were born on Mother's Day, a special blessing only given to a select group I often told myself. Raising one child at a time can be busy but two active, mischievous boys was certainly a challenge at times, not to mention also having a two and a half-year-old daughter. The boys were always busy building farms all over the house with their toy tractors and were always imitating the chores their father Rick was doing on our large dairy farm in the Niagara region. They proved many times that it was almost impossible to fence them in. I remember looking out into our fenced back yard one afternoon, believing that they were confined and that I could get some house chores done. As I looked out, I saw Adam holding up the bottom of the fencing as Brad scooted underneath and

then watched Brad hold the fence on the other side as Adam slid under.

We learned early that these two needed to be kept busy to burn off some of their energy, so they were enrolled into a variety of high energy sports: hockey in winter and ball hockey, inline hockey or lacrosse in the summer. We were that hockey family always at the arena or travelling to some tournament in various parts of the province, the USA and even to Europe for 10 days; a trip for our family that combined hockey games and sight-seeing in Germany, Austria and Czech Republic. A memory that we will never forget.

Adam loved sports and the outdoors. He loved to hunt and fish and was so proud of the buck he shot with his cross bow, the first season after getting his hunting licence. He commented on Twitter in July of 2014, how many more days until hunting season opened. Ironically, we buried Adam on opening day.

Adam loved welding and auto mechanics and was going to use his grade 12 year to decide which trade he would pursue after high school. To graduate with a technical red seal on his diploma, he would need to complete a manufacturing co-op, so in September he removed a couple of classes and added a co-op placement.

Friday September 26 started just like any other day in the Keunen household. Adam and Brad left for their co-op placements, Bradley to the local John Deere dealership and Adam to an auto recyclers, both just minutes away



Adam Keunen

from home. I remember seeing my husband Rick rush out the driveway with his green firefighter light flashing on the dash. Rick was a volunteer firefighter and the captain of our local department. About an hour after Rick left, he returned yelling for me as he entered the house. He made it up the 14 stairs to our upper floor in what seemed like three steps. I met him at the top. I could see that something wasn't right. "That call, it was Adam. Adam is dead." "What? How?" I responded. Adam was run over by a large payload and died of a massive head injury.

I remember trying to figure out what to do next. How do I get the news to my daughter away at Laurier University? I didn't want her to hear from a stranger, from social media or from a news bulletin. The most painful part of the day was telling Bradley that his twin brother was dead. He fell to the ground and pounded out his frustrations for over an hour. It tore out your heart knowing that you couldn't begin to take the pain away from him. They had been together since conception. The duo of destruction or the twin towers, as we lovingly referred to the two over the years, would be no longer.

At approximately 4 pm a plain-clothed police detective from the Niagara Regional

police department showed up in our driveway. I immediately started questioning him. How could this have happened to our son? Safety precautions had been engrained into Adam and Brad from a young age as there was always large equipment moving about on our farm.

Detective Carter informed us that Adam's job that morning had been going down rows of cars, picking up tire rims to be welded together to support wrecks in the yard. He explained that the Niagara Regional Police were investigating with the Ministry of Labour but that details would take time to process. Detective Carter tried to talk me out of seeing my son. I explained to him that I had been a critical care trauma nurse, I knew what I was going to see but I needed physical proof to start processing this horrible reality. I saw Adam in a black body bag in the back of the coroners' van before it was taken to the forensics lab for a full autopsy. The forensics team yelled at me not to touch the body. I remember turning and looking at them calmly and saying, "so I can't give my dead son a kiss goodbye?" I don't think they had ever seen a mom so calm in such a horrible situation. I was told the following week that I had freaked them out. "Do what you need to do Mrs. Keunen" was their response and I proceeded to give my son a kiss on his right cheek. The first of two. The second would be in his casket before we shut it forever.

The next few days were a blur of people visiting, police visits and meeting with school officials. We had TV crews outside our home and the funeral home, and our devastation was now being broadcast on national TV. Newspaper reporters and politicians were calling to get our statement about the co-op program. At the time of Adam's death, the Occupational Health and Safety Act didn't include co-op students and other 'unpaid learners'. Because of this, the Ministry of Labour wasn't able to be lead investigator even though this was a workplace death. This meant the Niagara Regional Police Department would lead the investigation. This was definitely a unique situation for the Ministry of Labour.

On a cold winter day in February 2015, my husband Rick, my son Brad and I sat with the Ministry of Labour representative, a detective from the Niagara Regional Police, and the police sergeant. Detective Carter who had handled much of the investigation with us was off but sent a message noting that if we still had questions following the meeting, he would be happy to answer them. This meeting took less than 15 minutes. We were told they concluded that Adam was walking beside a moving pay

loader. They knew from the driver that Adam had thrown a tire rim into the bucket on the front of the pay loader. They couldn't conclude if Adam was thrown off balance or perhaps his sunglasses fell off and he bent to pick them up. Adam was hit by the ladder of the payloader and thrown under the rear wheel. He died of his head injuries. We were told that there would be no charges laid because "everything was up to code". The Ministry of Labour representative told us that changes had been made to the Occupational Health and Safety Act in November 2014, but it wouldn't impact Adam's case because he died before the legislation changed.

We have learned to walk with this constant limp that never goes away.

This whole meeting seemed surreal to me. My son, who was so safety-conscious around equipment, was killed and no one even gets a hand slap? Where was the justice for my son? The detective from the Niagara Regional Police Department told me that "even the best swimmers can drown Mrs. Keunen" so the meeting ended with no answers, me in tears and a stupid cliché expression to explain my son's death.

Three days later, I was still very angry and confused about the meeting and called Detective Carter. He spent three hours with us going through the evidence. We went through each case scenario and he discussed why or why not the evidence could be ruled out. He explained that because Adam was not a worker at the time according to the old Occupational Health and Safety Act, any charges would have to be laid under the criminal code and while there was negligence, the criminal code didn't offer any options. The ergonomics report noted that there were only two vantage points of full visibility for the driver to see Adam and that Adam wasn't in either one of those spots. The driver of the pay loader had 30

years of experience. He knew the safety precautions to take but didn't that day for some reason. Were they trying to get the job done quickly before Adam left to go back to school? Were they cutting corners on safety? We will never have all the answers. The most important person here was unable to give his side of the story because he was dead.

On November 6, 2014, the Ontario government passed Bill 18 - Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act which expanded the definition of a worker to cover unpaid co-op students and other unpaid learners, giving them the basic rights held by all other workers.

For our family, this one death haunts us daily. We are still learning the workings of this new family without Adam in it. We have learned to walk with this constant limp that never goes away. Some days it is incredibly painful and yet on other days we seem to manage. We have been fortunate to have an amazing psychologist who has helped each of us deal with our struggles of grief. The support of our family and friends has also gotten us through some really dark days. Holidays and celebrations are a constant reminder that our family is missing an important link. My husband Rick battles PTSD as a result of the horrible call that as a parent, he never should have witnessed – such a sad reality for many rural parts of Canada, often times our first responders know and may even be related to the victims.

What I have learned through my journey with Threads of Life, is that I don't walk this journey alone. We are all threads in their quilt of workplace tragedy. All of you also walk with a limp and sometimes we must help one another deal with the pain of that limp.



Adam Keunen loved sports and the outdoors

THE DAY I BECAME A STATISTIC

Injured young worker dedicates career to preventing tragedies

by Wynny Sillito

Some people spend their entire lives trying to figure out what they want to be when they grow up. I've known since I was nine. This realization came in the form of a severely broken arm and the female paramedic who treated me that day. Even as a young child in significant pain, I could tell this paramedic was going above and beyond to minimize the trauma for both me and my mom. I wanted to be able to do this. To be the person who takes away the pain, minimizes the stress, and makes people feel safe. I went on to pursue that dream, and when I was 19, I graduated as a Primary Care Paramedic and was registered with the Alberta College of Paramedics the same year. It made me really happy to be the person to help calm someone's nerves and put their pieces back together on what was sometimes the worst day of their lives. I always knew I wanted to grow up to save the lives of others, but I had never even considered it could potentially cost me my own.

I became a statistic one week before my 24th birthday. On a winter day in 2011, I was working on the emergency response team at a facility in Northern Alberta, on a short, three-day project using a very toxic chemical known as SS2000, to clear the solid sulphur plugs out of a sour gas system. The project began with one of the most in-depth site-specific orientations I had attended. Because we were at least two hours from town, we needed to be very clear on the steps to be taken in the event of an emergency, specifically an exposure to



Wynny Sillito with her mom

the chemical being used. We reviewed the hazards associated with the job, introduced all of the emergency response team members (four responders for the three workers on site), and reviewed every aspect of the Emergency Response Plan (ERP) - right down to calling each of the phone numbers on the ERP to ensure they were correct, and assigning roles to everyone on site so each person knew their responsibilities if an emergency did occur. At this point in my career, I had been involved in a lot of high-risk jobs, but this was the most preparation I had ever witnessed.

The first two days of the job were fairly unremarkable. It was the middle of winter in Alberta, so it was cold, and we were working in a valley, so the wind was always blowing in two directions, but over all things were going well. Looking back on it, the only thing that I wasn't so keen on was that there was no phone service anywhere near the site or at the camp, so I wasn't able to talk to my family. The incident occurred on the third day of the job; the day everyone on the crew was going to get home to see their families.

Throughout that day the flame on the flare stack had gotten bigger, and as the sun set, fireballs began to fall from the stack. I'm no expert in the operation of a sour gas facility, but I did know that at no point should you see liquid balls of fire falling from the stack. I knew something unsafe was happening, but I thought to myself "The consultant must see this. He has to know something is wrong, and he has to say something." I was right, he did say something. He got on the radio and said "Hey everyone, look at the fireflies." I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I knew I should speak up and challenge him but I didn't say a word, because I was young, I was the only female on site, and I was "just the medic", so what did I know? Instead of speaking up, I went back to the ambulance to fill my pockets with gloves so I was prepared if things went wrong.

Sadly, my gut instinct was right, and something terrible did happen. The operator who ran the facility could see that one of the gauges wasn't reading properly and went to check on it. While he was in that building, something went wrong and he took the full force of the system in the form of high-pressured corrosive

chemical to his face and respiratory system. A chemical that was intended to melt solid sulphur was now on his face. With the chemical burning his skin and respiratory system, the operator shut down the plant to prevent further loss or injury. By the time the operator got to the ambulance where I was staged, I could see the chemical burning his skin. We needed to get the chemical flushed from his skin, but our shower truck, which was the only source of water for miles, was at the wellhead, which was now the hot zone. I used all of the saline I had in the ambulance to flush his skin and save his face, because I knew it would give me the best chance to save his airway. While I flushed his skin, two of the firemen put on their air packs and went into the plant to retrieve our shower truck, and the consultant began to make emergency phone calls, because I knew this man needed Advanced Life Support care.

While I felt we were really prepared for an emergency, everything was working against us. The weather was terrible, we only had 30 minutes of battery power because the plant was shut down, we couldn't transport by helicopter due to weather, and even if we could, this man's body was toxic, which would have put a flight crew at risk. In the end, we decontaminated his body as much as we could, put him in our ambulance, and since our site was four-wheel drive access only, we met an advanced care ambulance 30+km away on the access road to transfer his care and transport him to hospital. I remember watching that ambulance drive away in the middle of the night, during a snow storm, with our co-worker in the back, and not really knowing what the future would hold for him. What I didn't realize at the time was that I also had no idea what the future held for me.

Through the course of the operator's treatment, I got traces of that chemical on myself, and in the next 36 hours, I developed chemical reaction burns to my hands, arm, face, neck and scalp. I didn't realize what the burns were at first, thinking maybe it was frostbite from being outside in the cold for so long that night, but as they progressed, it became painfully clear what was happening to my skin and hair. I was assessed at the Grande Prairie hospital when I returned to town, and underwent steroid treatments over the following weeks. My recovery consisted of steroid treatments on each of the burned areas. I had to bandage and re-bandage my hand, taking me off the ambulance for the duration of my recovery, and was not allowed to wash my hair for the first four days after I started the treatment in an effort to help the steroids save it.

I remember thinking how good it was going to feel to finally have water run on my scalp, but as soon as the water hit, it was so painful it took my breath away. It felt like there were razor blades running down my scalp. I spent my 24th birthday away from my family, not knowing if the burns would leave permanent scars or if I would lose the hair on my head. As a young worker, I wanted to be exposed to as many different experiences as I could to broaden my resume, but one I had not expected or hoped for was learning how lonely it is to recover from workplace injury away from your family.

Fortunately, I am one of the lucky ones. My injuries would eventually heal, my burns left minimal scarring, and I didn't lose all of my hair. Eventually most of my hair grew out, and from this terrifying experience, I was left with only one small bald spot on my temple. To most people it seems like nothing, but to me it is a reminder of the events that took place that night. When I think about it, I can still smell that chemical burning the operator's skin, I can hear the way the plant alarm echoed off the walls of that valley, and I can still see the fear in the operator's eyes as he spoke about how badly he wanted to see his family again. I will always wonder: if I had spoken up when I first felt uneasy, would the events that night have played out differently?

Sadly, we aren't all lucky when it comes to workplace tragedy. That operator spent the first night at the hospital alone. No family there to support him, not knowing if he would recover, not even a representative from the company we were working for went to see him. His wife was not lucky either. She spent that first night away from him as it was unsafe for her to travel due to the poor weather conditions. She would

have had no clue what his recovery would look like, how badly he was injured, and wasn't there to hold his hand through it all. Through this recovery, I worried not only about myself, but about the impacts this incident would have on my family, our co-workers, and most of all that operator and his family. My mom wasn't lucky either. I come from a large family, but I am her baby (and she will tell you that to this very day). For her, the innocence of believing that I would make it home safely from work each day was stolen.

I wish I could tell my 23-year-old self to trust her gut, to challenge the consultant when she knew she wasn't safe, to refuse to remain on site if the risks weren't controlled, but I can't. What I can do is tell other young workers that there is nothing more important than your safety. There is no job, no advancement, no paycheque, truly no employment in this world that is worth your life or wellbeing. This incident taught me that you don't have to lose someone to lose a piece of yourself, that it is not only the people who are physically injured whose lives change forever following a workplace tragedy, and it confirmed to me that my career was better spent working to prevent workplace tragedies than responding to them.

I don't know where that operator is today or how his burns changed his life in the long run. I know he survived, but I can only imagine how that incident and the traumatic experience changed his, and the lives of everyone who loves him, because I know how it changed my own life. For the rest of her life, every single time I talk to my mother she will tell me to be safe, because one day her baby went to work, and she didn't make it home safely.



Wynny (second from left) and three of her five siblings walk in Steps for Life

The dynamics of grief and loss

From the Volunteer Family Guide Resource and Training Manual



Dr. J. William Worden defines grief as a “universal human response to loss”. It could be the loss of a loved one or a loved one’s health and ability to function, the loss of your own health and energy, or the loss of your home or means of providing for your family.

A family member who is dealing with the death of a loved one or living with a family member who has a work-related injury or illness may be grieving:

- the loss of a dream,
- the loss of an anticipated future,
- the loss of a relationship as they knew it, or
- the loss of hope for the future.

Family members whose loved one is living with a life-altering injury or illness may also be wondering how they will be able to care for their loved one and struggling with fatigue, anger, hopelessness and guilt. They may be experiencing financial difficulties and feeling trapped or isolated. Any of these feelings could leave a family member unable or unmotivated to care for themselves, leading them deeper into grief and despair.

COMMON REACTIONS TO GRIEF

Physical/Behavioural	Emotional	Cognitive	Spiritual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Avoidance and isolation ■ Change in appetite ■ Chest tightness or difficulty breathing ■ Exhaustion ■ Flu-like symptoms ■ Grinding teeth ■ Headaches ■ Immune suppression ■ Inability to sleep ■ Intensified startle reflex ■ Nausea ■ Profuse sweating ■ Spasms in the back or neck ■ Stomach knots ■ Visual difficulties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Anger ■ Anxiety ■ Blaming ■ Guilt ■ Hopelessness ■ Depression ■ Fear ■ Feeling overwhelmed ■ Panic ■ Feeling lost and abandoned ■ Inappropriate emotional responses ■ Irritability ■ Numbness ■ Verging on tears or sobbing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Detachment ■ Disbelief ■ Nightmares ■ Forgetfulness ■ Experiencing intrusive images ■ Hyper-vigilance ■ Negative self-talk ■ Depressive thoughts ■ Racing mind ■ Unable to concentrate ■ Wanting to be distracted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Asking why this is happening to him or her ■ Desiring peace of mind and joy ■ Having a crisis of faith ■ Hesitating to make attachments ■ Questioning the purpose of life ■ Searching and struggling

Reflection: counting on employers

by Susan Haldane

I don't even want to write this column, for fear I will jinx my good fortune – and I'm not really a superstitious person. My two sons are 26 and almost 24 – at the upper end of the young worker category – and have escaped all their work experiences more or less unharmed – to date, and so far as we know.

Workers aged 15 to 24 are more likely to be injured on the job than other workers. And young men tend to be injured in higher numbers than women, likely because of the types of jobs they're doing. My sons, in addition to working on our farm, have held jobs at other farms, lumber yards, propane dealers, arenas, libraries and nursing homes. Finished school now, one works at an office job that requires a lot of driving on Northern Ontario roads and the other in the emergency room at a city hospital.

If you are an employer, or a supervisor and you have young workers in your workplace, parents are counting on you.

Because of my work in health and safety, and with Threads of Life, I have worried almost every day they've gone to work. But my worry doesn't keep them safe, any more than worry protects the thousands of other young workers across Canada. So how does our society protect young workers? Not very well, you say, after reading the stories in this newsletter and the many, many other tragic losses Threads of Life families share. Then how can we protect young workers?

I often hear the theory that young workers are more likely to be injured because they feel "invincible" and they take more risks. I'm not sure I believe that – look at the stories in this newsletter. Both young people were very safety conscious. I also see so many resources aimed at helping young workers understand their rights and duties on the job. That's important but it's certainly not the whole answer. And in fact, it seems to me it's just not fair. Certainly, young workers like all workers need to take responsibility for understanding the risks of their work, reporting and controlling hazards. But surely the larger duty falls to the employers, the supervisors, the experienced co-workers, to protect these new members of our workplaces.

Sadly, I don't think there's any magic solution. Health and safety takes hard work, and all the pieces need to come together: legislation, training, information, supervision. But what could be more important? Project deadlines? Money? I don't think so.

I will continue to worry about my boys, even as they move out of the young worker age bracket – I figure as a mom, worry is part of my job description. I'll continue to ask them about training and safety practices where they work, and encourage them to ask questions as well. But I also have to rely on my sons' employers and supervisors to do the right thing and protect my boys. For so many Threads of Life families, that's not what happened.

If you are an employer, or a supervisor and you have young workers in your workplace, parents are counting on you.



Real young workers.



REAL STORIES



MAKE THE SAFETY MESSAGE STICK:

Bring a Threads of Life volunteer speaker to your college or high school.

Threads of Life's speakers tell the real stories behind the health and safety stats. They promote prevention by bringing home the devastating impact a workplace tragedy has on families, co-workers, and the community.

Because a workplace injury is no way to learn.

Learn more about our speakers bureau at www.threadsoflife.ca/speakers or call 888-567-9490

Volunteer Profile: **Alex Tuff**

by **Zaria Cornwall**, Threads of Life Content Specialist



Alex Tuff is a regular 25-year old; he loves his dog and being outdoors. However, seven years ago he had a life-changing experience. His brother, Kristopher, was killed in a workplace tragedy and it changed Alex's future.

Today, Alex spreads workplace safety via his job with the Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Safety Association and through his volunteer work at Threads of Life.

HOW DID YOU FIRST COME TO KNOW ABOUT THREADS OF LIFE?

My current employer, the Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Safety Association, was doing a photoshoot for rebranding and I was in school for occupational health and safety. An employee from the NLCSA, a coworker now, came to the school looking for models.

After that, me and a few other volunteer models went to lunch. We were all chatting and one girl asked us if we heard about the young guy that died from a workplace tragedy out in Labrador.

I said yes, I definitely heard about it since that young guy was my brother, Kristopher. She then told me that there was an organization that supported people who went through the same tragedies, it was called Threads of Life.

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR LOSS AND HOW FINDING THREADS OF LIFE HELPED YOU.

My brother's loss was really tough. I was young, only 18, and losing someone at 18 means I got to spend very little time with him. I wasn't legal yet to grab a beer with him and I didn't get to go to his wedding, and it was difficult to overcome but I do better now.

I always say that Threads of Life gives a voice to the voiceless. It's therapeutic to talk about what happened and it keeps my brother's memory alive. It helps so much. I mean everyone fears that when you lose someone, eventually people will forget them; pictures, documents, notes, they get lost. But, by speaking about it, we can keep the conversation going and not feel like we are crazy.

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES IN THREADS OF LIFE.

I attended my first family forum in 2014-2015 and I was intimidated. As the Threads of Life newsletters says: it's the club nobody wants to join. It's scary opening yourself up and pouring out your feelings. I'm scared about who I am talking to and why I am telling my story to these people.

So, when I stepped into the lobby and I saw the people there wanting to help, I knew it was fine. Everyone was so nice, they gave hugs, and just wanted to talk to you about what happened and how they can support you.

WHEN DID YOU START VOLUNTEERING?

I probably started volunteering with Threads of Life in 2015 and then I did speakers bureau training in 2016 and I love to do the speaking. It's my favourite part of volunteering.

WHY DO YOU VOLUNTEER FOR THREADS OF LIFE?

I've always loved to volunteer and I've always been the guy to help. But, after seeing the other volunteers working so hard to support others, I knew that I had to be one of those people.

Like I said, my favourite part is the speakers bureau. I love when I am talking and you can hear a penny drop and you know that everyone is listening and the message got to them.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE MEMORY ABOUT YOUR WORK AS A VOLUNTEER?

I was doing a speech for Newfoundland & Labrador Hydro and it was North American Occupational Safety & Health Week.

People start to pile in and as I give my speech, I see one middle-aged guy in the back bawling. I make a mental note to check on him after I finish, just to make sure that he's fine.

I finish my speech and the guy approaches me and tells me that his father died a few years ago from an industrial accident. I knew this guy needed someone to talk to about his tragedy and so I referred him to a Threads of Life employee, so he could get the support he needed.

WHAT OTHER COMMUNITY/VOLUNTEERING DO YOU DO?

Threads of Life is my charity of choice and most of the volunteering I do is with this organization, but I volunteer in my community too.

I live in a city called Mount Pearl and every year we have a festival in February called the "Frosty Festival". It's a lot of fun with concerts and wine shows, plus bingo which is a major hit. More recently, I have gotten into playing Santa and I love to do that.



Youth employment program builds a legacy of safety

More than 500 young people have participated in Dexterra's OYEP program to date.

When safety is truly woven into a company's way of working, it can create benefits and opportunities that spread beyond the workplace. That's the case with Dexterra's Outland Youth Employment Program (OYEP), a gold medal winner for young worker safety in the 2019 Canada's Safest Employer Awards.

OYEP facilitates training and employment for Indigenous youth in communities across Canada. It was launched in 2000 as a forestry training initiative, and continues to provide six weeks of hands-on work experience every summer. At this point, Dexterra's Vice President, Health & Safety Lee-Anne Lyon-Bartley reports, the program claims a network of more than 500 graduates from 103 communities.

Lyon-Bartley is a Steps for Life participant and volunteer, a member of the Toronto walk committee. Dexterra works in forestry operations, facilities management and remote workforce accommodations. The company's safety culture is founded on its values: accountability, diversity of thought, empowerment and being highly responsive, Lyon-Bartley explains. Health and safety are integrated from the senior leadership team to every worker.

The youth employment program "fits into this culture no differently than any of our other projects," she says. To ensure the participants are "engaged and enthusiastic about our safety culture," OYEP staff "host morning tailgate meetings with the entire camp to reinforce the safety culture for the day and to discuss any

potential hazards of the day. There is a safety committee established—led by a Safety Officer—which meets weekly to re-cap the week's events, if any and discuss how they can be mitigated in the future ... They also offer a safety mentorship program through our safety committee. Youth are paired up with management for safety-specific training. This includes camp walk-throughs, vehicle inspections, site inspections, filling out paper work and re-stocking safety supplies. Each pair is responsible for specific tasks, which later get audited by the camp supervisor. This creates a culture of accountability and ownership."

The youth come away from the program with paid job experience, certifications and life skills. As a result of OYEP, a number of former participants have been hired for permanent positions with Dexterra. In addition, graduates contribute to their communities, creating benefits for band leadership, administration, social services, local industry and entrepreneurship. For the participants themselves, Lyon-Bartley says, there are social, economic and educational benefits.

"Ultimately," she says, "we are setting the foundation for youth to have a productive and happy adult life, whether in their communities or elsewhere."

For more information about the annual Canada's Safety Employer awards, visit safestemployers.com.

For more information on Dexterra, visit dexterra.com.

Register today! And tell us why



**Registration is open now for Steps for Life-Walking
for Families of Workplace Tragedy 2020.**

It's time to sign up, recruit your team, start your fundraising engines and share why you do it. For 2020 we're using the hashtag #MyWhy so you can talk about why Steps for Life is important to you. Register today for your local walk at www.stepsforlife.ca. If there's no walk near you, you can still get involved by creating your own event through our virtual walk, Your Walk Your Way. Then spread the word about Steps for Life and Threads of Life by following us on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram, sharing our posts and creating posts of your own.

Stepping up...nation-wide!

Our national sponsors create a solid foundation of commitment and support for Threads of Life from coast to coast. *Thank you*





Steps for Life fundraising fundamentals

Steps for Life makes so many good things happen. It builds up commitment to safety; it lets families know they're supported; it honours lives changed forever. And as the primary fundraiser for Threads of Life, maybe the most important good thing is the money Steps for Life raises to provide programs and services for those affected by workplace tragedy. In 2019, 5,500 people walked in Steps for Life events. If every one of those walkers raised just \$200, Steps for Life would bring in well over \$1 million in funds. Imagine all the good things that would happen! Want to be part of that?

HERE'S HOW:

- 1. Set up your personal page online.** Share your story. Upload your picture. Tell people about your progress! You'll be driving people to this page to get online donations. You want it to represent who you are and why Threads of Life is important to you.
- 2. Set your goal high.** Challenge yourself to surpass the minimum! You can do this and you're not alone!
- 3. Get your first donation today.** Get the ball rolling! That first donation is a feeling you'll never forget and motivates you to make a difference. Start NOW. Ask someone you're sure won't say no. (Like to collect donations the old fashioned way? Use our pledge form!)
- 4. Send an email to everyone you know.** Friends, family, co-workers, everyone! Reach out and tell them why you're taking on Steps for Life. There are pre-written emails waiting for you in your Participant Centre once you've registered online. Now you have no excuses.
- 5. Use technology to share, share, share.** Log in to your Participant Centre and download your online fundraising tools!
- 6. Create a possible donor list.** Take action on your to-do list! Write down the names of the people and businesses that are part of your life. Take the time to speak to them face-to-face about the importance of Steps for Life.
- 7. Repeat, remind, rewind.** Your friends are busy! Remind them to donate! Most people need to be reminded a few times before they find the right moment to complete a donation.
- 8. Say THANK YOU.** Those are two powerful little words. Thank donors personally, and then through emails, and on social media. They will LOVE the recognition and feel that your journey is now theirs as well.



Coming Events

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

Steps for Life - May (check www.stepsforlife.ca for your local walk location and date)

Atlantic Family Forum

June 12-14, 2020

Central Family Forum

September 25 - 27, 2020

Prairie-Western Family Forum

October 23-25, 2020

SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER!

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

How to reach us

Toll-free: 1-888-567-9490

Fax: 1-519-685-1104

Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support - Threads of Life

P.O. Box 9066

1795 Ernest Ave.

London, ON N6E 2V0

contact@threadsoflife.ca

www.threadsoflife.ca

www.stepsforlife.ca



Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support

Threads of Life is a registered charity dedicated to supporting families along their journey of healing who have suffered from a workplace fatality, life-altering illness or occupational disease. Threads of Life is the Charity of Choice for many workplace health and safety events. Charitable organization business #87524 8908 RR0001.

MISSION

Our mission is to help families heal through a community of support and to promote the elimination of life-altering workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths.

VISION

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

VALUES

We believe that:

Caring: Caring helps and heals.

Listening: Listening can ease pain and suffering.

Sharing: Sharing our personal losses will lead to healing and preventing future devastating work-related losses.

Respect: Personal experiences of loss and grief need to be honoured and respected.

Health: Health and safety begins in our heads, hearts and hands, in everyday actions.

Passion: Passionate individuals can change the world.

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Yes I will, help bring hope and healing to families

Gift Payment Options

- I'd like to make monthly gifts
 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$ _____
- I'd prefer to make a one-time gift
 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$ _____
- I've enclosed a void cheque to start direct withdrawal for monthly giving
- You may also donate to Threads of Life online at www.threadsoflife.ca/donate
- Please send me updates about Threads of Life events via email at: _____

Visa MasterCard

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
account number _____ _____
expiry

NAME ON CARD _____

SIGNATURE _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

ADDRESS (for income tax receipt) _____

Threads of Life, P.O. Box 9066 • 1795 Ernest Ave • London, ON N6E 2V0 1 888 567 9490 • www.threadsoflife.ca

All donations are tax deductible. Charitable Registration Number #87524 8908 RR0001