



Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support

## **‘Creative Sentencing’ helps Alberta families impacted by workplace tragedy**

**LONDON**, 6 September 2007 – A new Alberta law has been applied to directly support families who have been impacted by a workplace fatality or life-altering injury. Since 2003, as a result of ‘creative sentencing’, companies found in non-compliance of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* have been fined close to \$2 million. These monies have been directed to charitable groups that support programs that will prevent similar experiences.

On Tuesday, August 28 an Alberta company was fined for failing to protect a worker who received a life-altering injury in a manufacturing incident. A sum of \$95,000 will be directed to Threads of Life, a national charitable organization, that supports families along their journey of healing who have suffered from a workplace fatality, life-altering injury or occupational disease. Threads of Life provides families with the only one-on-one peer support program in the world that is delivered by trained Volunteer Family Guides who have also experienced a workplace tragedy. It also provides families with links to community resources and opportunities to take action by promoting workplace injury prevention in their communities.

Tamara Trull, an Edmonton-based Crown prosecutor, has been working with the new law since it was passed in 2003. In her experience, ‘creative sentencing’ decisions are now being considered in 95% of cases where there has been a violation of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. “I truly believe that it allows for more prevention, and that it really improves health and safety in the province.” So far, Alberta has been a leader in this field and Trull says prosecutors are focused on keeping the sentencing decisions creative.

The creative sentencing monies resulting from last week’s decision will support the development and distribution of two resource booklets for Alberta families directly impacted by a traumatic workplace fatality or a life-altering injury. Threads of Life will also be working on coordinating a three-day forum for families impacted by workplace tragedy. The forum will be a time for families to network, share their experiences and ultimately learn healthy coping skills along their journey of healing. The forum will be held in Alberta during the [spring](#) of 2008.

“No amount of money will ever bring back a loved one. But every family I have ever met says they want to do something in memory of their loved one. All they want is for this to never happen to another family ever again, and creative sentencing helps make that happen.” says Shirley Hickman, Executive Director of Threads of Life, the Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support.

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