



Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (FAQs)

1. Why focus on supporting families who have been affected by a workplace tragedy?

While there are support organizations for injured workers, there was no support group for families living in the aftermath of a workplace fatality, life-altering injury or occupational disease. Threads of Life was created to fill this gap.

The long-term emotional, societal and financial consequences of this gap are significant. These consequences include: psychiatric problems, stress-related physical health problems, substance abuse treatment, family stresses, marital breakdown, suicide, loss of productivity, loss of personal income, increased social welfare costs, and more. This is a huge and largely hidden burden for every citizen and taxpayer, and one that can also be substantially reduced.

When a workplace fatality or severe injury/illness occurs, most families need emotional support and caring to make it through the aftermath of the trauma. Although families receive support from their loved ones during the immediate crisis, these families are often alone as their support network 'moves on'. Who knows what families go through? *Other families of workplace tragedy* – the membership of Threads of Life. Through the Family Support Programs and services, families need not feel alone or abandoned.

2. What is Threads of Life and its purpose?

Threads of Life is a charitable, national, not-for-profit organization dedicated to help Canadian families along their journey of healing after they have experienced a workplace fatality, life-altering injury or occupational disease. Threads of Life provides a network of hope, healing and positive experiences.

Threads of Life provides families with peer support assistance and referral and promotes public awareness and accountability for workplace health and safety. Families have identified that this helps to fill a gap in our country's health and safety and social systems. Threads of Life is supported by a group of volunteers from across the country that has been personally touched by a workplace tragedy. Working with provincial Threads of Life champions, this unique organization assists families who have been affected by a workplace tragedy by providing:

- The only one-on-one peer support program that is delivered by trained Volunteer Family Guides who have also experienced their own workplace tragedy
- Referrals to professional support services,
- Advisory support regarding the workplace investigation and inquest process
- Opportunities to be a Canadian voice, to promote workplace injury prevention and awareness within their own community by joining the Speakers Bureau or

by participating in the annual Steps for Life – Walking for Victims of Workplace Tragedy 5K walk held on the first Sunday in May.

3. Who was behind the development of Threads of Life?

Canadian family members and friends living in the aftermath of a workplace tragedy were behind the development of this unique initiative. Representatives from corporate, labour and public sector organizations voluntarily worked together on an advisory committee to support strategic and organizational planning. The family members and these representatives shared the vision that workplace injuries are predictable and preventable. Committee members included family members who had lost a loved one to a workplace tragedy, Council of Leaders in Prevention Breakthroughs, Fuel Advertising Inc., Industrial Accident Prevention Association, Institute for Work and Health, John Deere, Ontario Office of the Worker Advisor, Ontario Federation of Labour and the Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB).

4. How is Threads of Life funded?

It is funded primarily from a number of grants stemming from the HRDC, WSIB and the Canadian Autoworkers (CAW) as well as public donations. To date it has received over \$900,000 from in-kind donations. In-kind donations include the creative for all promotional materials, meeting space, materials for the Steps for Life events and many others. Threads of Life is currently working with the Ontario Ministry of Labour and the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General regarding the allocation of the Victim's Justice Surcharge pertaining to fines through the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

5. What can the Canadian public do to help support Threads of Life?

Threads of Life is supported by a group of dedicated volunteers, most of whom have been personally touched by a workplace tragedy and united in their belief that injuries in the workplace are predictable and preventable.

You can support Threads of Life in a variety of ways:

- Volunteer your time
- Make a donation
- Provide much needed services

If you would like to become a Threads of Life volunteer and offer support to others along their journey of healing, please contact Threads of Life at 1-888-567-9490.

Contact:

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