



# *Gratitude*

Threads of Life 2021 Annual Report

## CHAIR'S MESSAGE



*Bill Stunt*

We may be wired, as humans, to focus on the negative — and there has been no shortage of negative things to draw our attention and energy.

During this second year of the pandemic, many charities have had a very difficult time. There have certainly been challenges for Threads of Life too — all our in-person family forums were cancelled for a second year, Steps for Life walks were all virtual, and many fundraisers could not happen. But not only did our partners, funders and sponsors stick with us, many increased their support, and new partners came on board! Not only did our volunteers continue to give their time, but many also came up with creative new ways to help, and new volunteers joined! While some revenues declined, with assistance from government funding programs, we were able to keep our staff, and in fact, late in the year, we filled two vacant positions for development coordinators — welcome to Shari Hinz in Western Canada and Christine Kennedy-Babineau in Atlantic Canada.

Like so many of us, the board of directors got used to meeting via Zoom and has worked hard the past two years to ensure policies are up to date, our governance is effective, and the organization has the resources it needs to be successful. At each meeting, we are careful to look not only at what has happened and is happening but at the future too. We apply our foresight to both risks and opportunities for Threads of Life, to ensure the best for our family members.

As the chair of the board for Threads of Life, I feel tremendous gratitude to my fellow board members, our partners, volunteers and staff for all their contributions, and to the family members who invite Threads of Life to accompany them on their journey of healing.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(as of December 31, 2021)

**BILL STUNT** *Chair*  
Family Member, Ontario

**PETER DEINES** *Vice Chair*  
CEO, CannAmm Occupational Testing Services, Alberta

**JACKIE MANUEL** *Treasurer*  
CEO Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Safety Association, Newfoundland and Labrador

**WALLY POWER** *Secretary*  
Family Member, Nova Scotia

**SEAN ALGER** *Director*  
SVP Corporate Services, Ledcor, Alberta

**SHELLY DAUPHINEE** *Director*  
Director Workplace Services & Specialized Adjudication, Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia

**WENDY-ELLEN NITTEL** *Director*  
Family Member, Alberta

**ERIN PITRUZELLA** *Director*  
Family Member, Ontario



# Overflowing with Gratitude



Gratitude doesn't always come naturally — that's why our parents had to remind us to say 'thank you'. Then researchers discovered that not only is gratitude polite, it's also good for our mood and mental health. Harvard Medical School tells us true gratitude is more than just the action of saying 'thanks' — it is appreciation for all that we receive. Acknowledging all that goodness helps us see that the source lies at least partly outside ourselves, and connects us to something larger. Many people have adopted a practice of daily gratitude, responding to gratitude prompts or noting three things they're grateful for in a gratitude journal. At Threads of Life, as we look back over the past year, we have no need for prompts, and we can't limit ourselves to three things — we are overflowing with gratitude! Family members — both new and those who have been with us for years — entrusted their stories and their healing to Threads of Life. Our volunteers and partners ensured that our programs could continue in spite of the pandemic, and those programs are making an impact, helping families on their journey. We are grateful for all the trust, commitment, passion, and support we have witnessed throughout 2021. Consider this annual report our gratitude journal.

## Gratitude list 2021:



The **192 new family members** who found Threads of Life during 2021.

**230** family members, partners, volunteers and staff who **attended virtual family forums.**



**218 attendees** who shared, learned and supported each other at online **FamiliesConnect sessions.**

All the **walkers, sponsors and partners** who worked together through Steps for Life to **raise \$549,500 to support programs** for families of workplace tragedy.



The **40 new volunteers** who joined Threads of Life in 2021 in a variety of roles.



# Our Work: Supporting Families

## We are grateful for:

- The 192 new family members who found Threads of Life during 2021.
- Our partners, who helped almost half of those families find us.



Work-related tragedies continued to occur in 2021, in spite of, and even because of the pandemic. Last year, 192 new family members found their way to Threads of Life looking for support — an increase of 50 per cent over the previous year's total. At Threads of Life, we don't reach out directly to families — they find us through our partners, through the media, through Steps for Life and through web searches. Partners like the workers' compensation boards, ministries of labour and safety associations are key — roughly 45 per cent of new families say they discovered Threads of Life because of information passed on by one of those organizations.

We are thankful that our core programs could deliver support to our new and existing family members, even when we couldn't be face to face.

Through our **Volunteer Family Guide** program, many of those new families were matched with a trained peer guide who lives with a similar tragedy. More than 70 Volunteer Family Guides have been trained to support other families, and those relationships are not just for brand-new family members — many extend for years and evolve into friendships. We are grateful for this adaptable model of peer support and for the volunteers who faithfully reach out to others.

*"Threads of Life has not only been an amazing support ... but also has become an extended family. I know that if I ever need them they would be there with open arms for me and my family."*

- family member survey comment



*"A workplace tragedy is hard to deal with because it is so unexpected, that is why Threads of Life is so important. It pairs you up with people that face similar tragedies. You share stories of your loved ones, cry together, laugh together and form a bond that lasts a lifetime."*

- family member survey comment

## We are grateful for:

- 230 family members, partners, facilitators, volunteers and staff who attended virtual family forums.
- 218 attendees who shared, learned and supported each other at online FamiliesConnect sessions.

*"I have come back from each forum with so much positivity."*

- family member survey comment

We missed being together for our annual **Family Forums** in 2021, but appreciated that we could gather online — 230 people participated in one of the three regional forums. And we're extra-grateful that we are able to plan for in-person forums in 2022!



We wouldn't exactly say we're grateful for the pandemic, but we are thankful that sometimes, innovation is born of necessity. When in-person events were cancelled by the pandemic, we were able to move some programs — like our family forums — online, and created a brand new service: monthly online workshops we call FamiliesConnect. The topics ranged from self-care to photography to the popular "ask a therapist" session, and more than 200 participants attended workshops over the year, including a number of families new to Threads of Life. At the start of each session, participants introduce themselves and are encouraged to say the name of the loved one who was injured, killed or made ill by workplace tragedy — a moment of connection they have told us means a great deal to them. FamiliesConnect gives members a combination of practical coping skills and less-tangible things: the opportunity to be heard and to realize they are not alone.

*"[The leader]'s style is so real. It was like sitting at the kitchen table with her just chatting. She knows her stuff and is passionate about it."*

- FamiliesConnect participant

*"I felt comfortable [on Zoom] as I am very shy, and I was able to get my story out somewhat. I credit this to the facilitators, they were excellent. Thanks to you all."*

- FamiliesConnect participant



# Our Work: Prevention Outreach

## We are grateful for:

- Family members who shared their stories in Day of Mourning videos, which reached 11,400 people.
- All those who listened and heard our 51 Speaker's Bureau presentations.

We are thankful for all the progress that's been made in health and safety over the years, but Threads of Life and our family members won't rest until workplace tragedies are eliminated. One of ways we tackle that is by helping people understand the impact on a family, community and workplace when something does go wrong on the job. That's why **Day of Mourning** is such an important day for us — not only is it a day to mark those lives changed forever, it's also an opportunity to move closer to our vision. In 2021, while in-person events weren't possible, four of our family members shared their stories on video, and combined with our recorded Day of Mourning ceremony, these videos reached 11,400 people.

A handful of in-person **Speaker's Bureau** presentations were possible, but the demand for virtual presentations grew over the year, and we are grateful that while these may not have the impact of a face-to-face speech, they can reach more people — those in remote regions, workers on the night shift, or companies with multiple sites. Though the virtual element makes it difficult to track, we do know that thousands of people heard our speakers' stories in 2021. We know the impact of those stories is to change behaviours and safety cultures.



*"I learned that when I share dad's story I am keeping his legacy alive and it makes me stronger than I ever thought I could be. I can turn my anger, grief and hopelessness into something productive."*

- family member survey comment

# Our Work: Steps for Life

## We are grateful for:

- All the walkers, sponsors and partners who worked together to raise \$549,500 to support programs for families of workplace tragedy.
- The creativity of our volunteer committees who held virtual opening ceremonies in 15 communities.

How could we feel anything but gratitude (and awe!) for the committed volunteers across Canada who came up with creative ways to carry on with **Steps for Life-Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy** events in spite of the pandemic? While a few small groups were able to gather outside with physical distancing, Steps for Life was overall a virtual event in 2021. Volunteers hosted virtual openings on a variety of platforms, combined with video greetings, virtual scavenger hunts, online auctions and Facebook live concerts. Threads of Life staff shipped hundreds of t-shirts to teams in advance, and participants shared photos and videos of themselves out completing their steps. Their commitment and passion for health and safety was an inspiration!



*“When I was injured at work, it was months before I was able to walk again, and that is part of why Steps for Life is important to me. Not only because of the programs and supports that it helps fund for Threads of Life, but also for how it symbolizes the strength and perseverance of everyone who has suffered a workplace tragedy and the loved ones of those who never got the chance to tell their own stories.”*

- Steps for Life family spokesperson





# Thank you to our partners!

Of course good friends will be on our gratitude list! We ask organizations to support Threads of Life in four ways: by growing awareness, participation, volunteerism and revenues. So many of our corporate, association and government friends help us in multiple ways – they ensure more families can find us, they encourage volunteers, and they provide funds that allow us to offer our programs free of charge to families affected by workplace tragedy.

*"I became involved with Threads of Life and gained my life back and learned to feel joy again and purpose"*

- family member survey comment

## We are grateful for:

- Partners like Emergent Biosolutions and Kruger, which honour safety accomplishments with a donation to Threads of Life.
- Our partner Franco-Nevada which offered to match donations to our year-end appeal ... and all those who gave in response.
- Partners like Mark's Commercial which whole-heartedly contribute to awareness, participation, volunteerism and revenue.
- Long-time supporters like the Ontario Petroleum Contractors' Association, which has raised funds and awareness through its annual golf tournament – even during the pandemic.
- The compensation boards and ministries of labour across Canada, including new partner WCB Yukon, which all ensure families can find support.
- The Board of Canadian Registered Safety Professionals (BCRSP), which provides annual scholarships to family members attending post-secondary studies. 2021 recipients of the BCRSP-Threads of Life scholarship are:
  - Hope Harroun, AB
  - Silver Kuris, ON
  - Anneka Vanfeggelen, NS
  - Mack Durant, NS





# Thank you to our volunteers!

From providing a listening ear to a struggling family member, to facilitating a workshop; from coordinating an entire Steps for Life walk, to posting walk updates on Facebook; from sharing their story before hundreds of people, to sending a thoughtful email to one, our volunteers do everything and Threads of Life wouldn't exist without them. In 2021, we launched a new volunteer role, the Community Engagement Volunteer, and had several individuals step forward to become ambassadors for Threads of Life in their community. While the pandemic made some volunteer roles difficult, we saw volunteers try new approaches, like Zoom speaker presentations, online facilitation and virtual fundraising, to fill the gaps. We can never fully express our gratitude to the family members, community members and partners who give their time and energy to support others.

## We are grateful for:

- The volunteers who adapted to help deliver new and existing programs in spite of the pandemic.
- The 40 new volunteers who joined Threads of Life in 2021 in a variety of roles.

## 2021 Volunteer Awards

### 10-year active & current volunteer

- Tami Helgeson
- Carolyn Sim

### Board member of Threads of Life

- Bill Stunt

### Partner of Threads of Life

- Aecon
- Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training & Skill Development
- Ontario Petroleum Contractors' Association
- Unifor Canada
- Workplace NL

### Family Support program advancement

- Marj Deyell
- Barb Murray
- Wendy-Ellen Nittel

### Community Action program advancement

- Virginia Campeau
- Russell Claus
- Eugene Gutierrez
- Holly Van Drine

### Steps for Life length of volunteer service

- Abel Amorim
- Allen Armstrong
- Dermott Barrett
- Charles Baxter
- Dayle Biggin
- Ken Bondy
- Lori Chynn
- Brian Curphey
- Cristal Diemer-Ewles
- Patrick Hauser
- Lynda Kolly
- Kathy Lukeman
- Jackie Manuel
- Jennifer McGillis
- Bob Ocrane
- Darren Rief
- Emily Roadhouse
- Mark Roehler
- Jennifer Ruszkowski
- Lindy Silliker
- Kerri Stewart
- Veronica Suszynski
- Laura Synyard
- Dan Trottier

*"I wish I had known about Threads of Life when I lost my father. Being in the dark, not knowing where to look or who to contact for support can be a challenge. In my role as a Volunteer Family Guide, I hope that I can lift that darkness...if only a little. As a speaker, if I can prevent just one fatality, occupational disease or injury, then my father's death will not have been in vain. It is a large undertaking, trying to change mindsets, nonetheless, I stand behind what Threads of Life does for our community and country."*

- Threads of Life volunteer

# Summary of Financial Statements

	2021 Totals	2020 Totals
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>	\$	\$
Cash & Marketable Securities	2,714,927	2,258,796
Accounts Receivable	9,109	71,478
Grants Receivable	0	0
GST/HST Recoverable	5,552	18,826
Prepays & Deposits	23,687	60,875
	<u>2,753,275</u>	<u>2,409,975</u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts Payable	48,757	47,744
Deferred Revenue	175,628	202,302
Canadian Emergency Business Account Loan	60,000	60,000
	<u>284,385</u>	<u>310,046</u>
<b>FUND BALANCES</b>		
Unrestricted Operating Reserves	2,468,890	2,099,929
	<u>2,753,275</u>	<u>2,409,975</u>

## Audited financial information available upon request

	2021 Hard Costs	2021 In-kind	2021 Totals	2020 Totals
<b>REVENUES</b>	\$	\$	\$	\$
Grants & Awards	525,333	0	525,333	515,000
Fundraising	768,171	0	768,171	732,598
In-kind Donations	0	212,836	212,836	255,165
Creative Sentencing	20,000	0	20,000	0
Government Subsidies	205,984	0	205,984	295,477
Interest & Miscellaneous Income	9,241	0	9,241	17,708
	<u>1,528,729</u>	<u>212,836</u>	<u>1,741,565</u>	<u>1,815,948</u>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Salaries & Benefits	939,011	0	939,011	992,311
Purchased Support Services	24,597	600	25,197	21,723
Events	55,897	124,376	180,273	155,569
Publications & Printing	23,555	0	23,555	24,267
Publicity & Promotions	14,837	4,014	18,851	30,646
Volunteer Training & Programs	4,275	24,447	28,722	105,770
General & Office	37,188	0	37,188	21,891
Rent - Office & Storage	17,644	38,930	56,574	62,144
Communications	17,777	0	17,777	20,607
Meeting & Travel Expenses	2,034	0	2,034	19,957
Professional Fees	8,315	20,469	28,784	25,855
Scholarships	10,000	0	10,000	12,500
Board & Liability Insurance	4,638	0	4,638	4,452
	<u>1,159,768</u>	<u>212,836</u>	<u>1,372,604</u>	<u>1,497,692</u>
<b>EXCESS REVENUES</b>	<u>368,961</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>368,961</u>	<u>318,256</u>

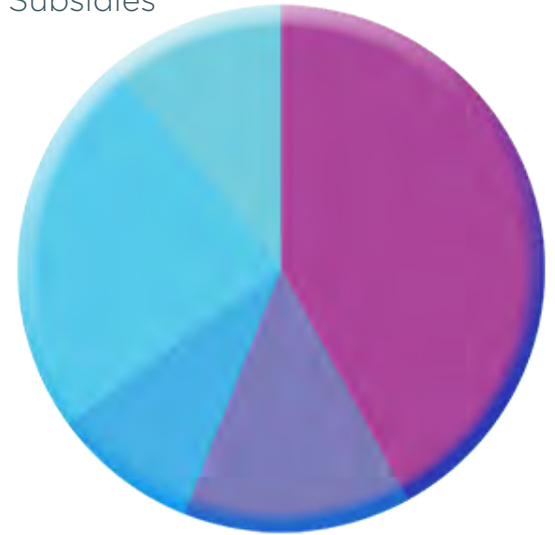
## 2021 Income Sources



- Steps for Life
- Grants
- In-Kind
- Donations
- Misc. Fundraising
- Sponsorship Family Forums
- Creative Sentencing
- Investments
- Government Subsidies

## 2021 Program Spending

- Education
- Fundraising
- Administration
- Family Support
- Training



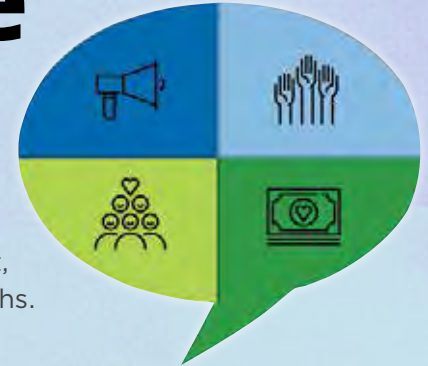
## Threads of Life *Staff*

Christine Kennedy-Babineau	Regional Development Coordinator – Atlantic Canada & Quebec
Heather Lyle	National Manager – Steps for Life
Karen Lapierre Pitts	Manager – Family Support
Kelley Thompson	Office and Administrative Assistant
Kimberly Bondame	Administrative Coordinator
Lorna Catrambone	Regional Development Coordinator and Manager – Volunteer Resources
Patti Penny	Speakers Bureau Coordinator (retired in February 2022)
Sandra Hickman	Production Coordinator
Sarah Wheelan	Communications Coordinator
Scott McKay	Director – Fundraising & Partnerships
Shari Hinz	Regional Development Coordinator – Western Canada
Sharon Freeman	Coordinator
Shirley Hickman	Executive Director
Susan Haldane	Manager – Marketing & Communications

## COVID-19 and Threads of Life financial statements:

The outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019, or COVID-19, has spread across the globe and is impacting worldwide economic activity. This global pandemic poses the risk that the association or its members, employees, contractors, suppliers, and other partners may be unable to conduct regular activities for an indefinite period of time. While it is not possible at this time to estimate the impact that COVID-19 could have on the association's activities, the continued spread of COVID-19 and the measures taken by the federal, provincial, and municipal governments to contain its impact could adversely impact the association's activities, financial condition or results of operations. Specifically, the association had to move its "Steps for Life" event from in person to virtual in 2020 and 2021, as well as cancel all in-person family forums and move them to one virtual forum. This caused a reduction in revenues, which was partially offset by a reduction in expenses to run the events. To further offset the revenue decreases that occurred, the association applied for and received \$205,984 (2020 - \$295,477) from the government for wage and rent subsidies. The extent to which the COVID-19 outbreak impacts the association's future financial results will depend on future developments that are highly uncertain and cannot be predicted, including new information that may emerge concerning the spread of the virus and government actions.

# Gratitude for all the ways you help!



We're so thankful to all the individuals and organizations who share our commitment to helping families heal through a community of support, and promoting the elimination of life-altering injuries, illnesses and deaths. **If you'd like to help too, here's what you can do:**

- **SPREAD THE WORD** – Tell someone who needs support about Threads of Life.
- **VOLUNTEER** – Support Threads of Life's programs, events and activities across Canada.
- **PARTICIPATE** – If you're a family member, come to a FamiliesConnect workshop or Family Forum. If you're a supporter, sign up for Steps for Life.
- **DONATE** – A monthly gift of as little as \$13.46 will print and mail our newsletter to 20 families in 2022. Just \$26.66 per month could send one volunteer to speaker training for a day.

*"I love who I am now, though it's been a long and hard and painful journey. I don't have all the answers and I have a ways to go yet. But between working with Threads of Life and helping other people I have found my passion and a renewed sense of purpose too. I am the healthiest and happiest I have been."*

- family member survey comment



## THREADS OF LIFE

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contact@threadsoflife.ca  
www.threadsoflife.ca  
www.stepsforlife.ca

Charitable organization business  
#87524 8908 RR001  
Threads of Life is the Charity of Choice  
for workplace health and safety events.

Threads of Life supports the UN  
Sustainable Development Goals.



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