

threads of life

VOL.22 NO.1 SPRING 2024

PREVENTION

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SUPPORT

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PARTNERSHIP

Many Routes *to* Healing

Just as every family member's experience is unique, we know there is no one-size-fits-all approach to the healing journey. Some need to walk, and some need to run – literally! Some quietly meditate while others speak their story out loud. Thankfully all those paths to healing are part of Threads of Life, forming a network of understanding and support.

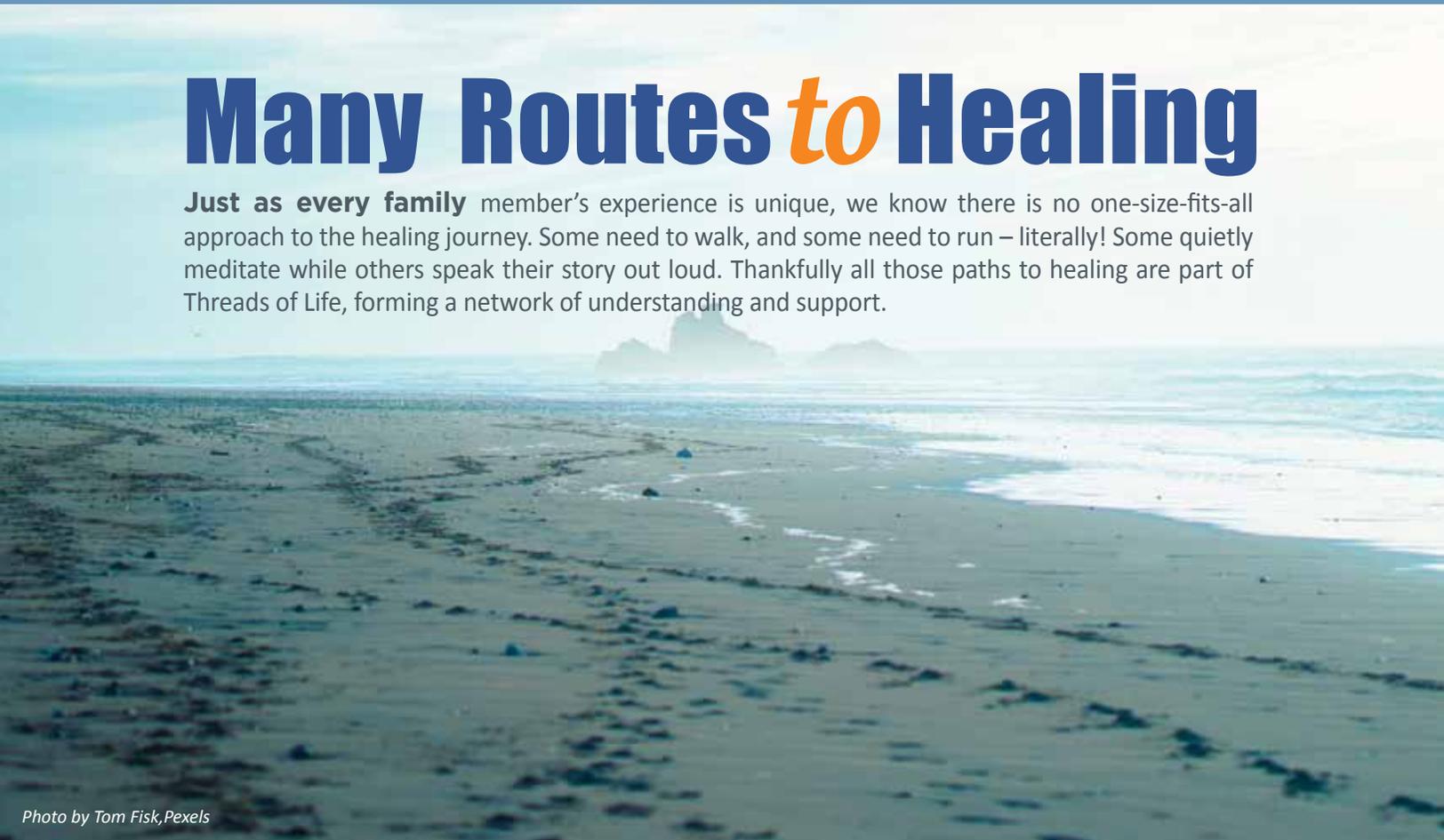


Photo by Tom Fisk, Pexels

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Bill Stunt



I always think it's so appropriate that health and safety season comes in the spring. We think of spring as a time of renewal and fresh starts. Day of Mourning, Steps for Life events and national Safety and Health week all combine to put a focus

on workplace health and safety. Of course we want people to think of safety year-round, but this is an ideal time for a fresh look at ways to build the world we all want: one where work-related injuries, illnesses and deaths are morally, socially and economically unacceptable.

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A FEW MORE DECADES

by **Tara Elliott**

Most of us can recall where we were, and exactly what we were doing on the morning of September 11th, 2001. This is called a flashbulb memory – defined as a vivid, detailed memory of a highly emotional or significant event, often associated with surprising or impactful news. I can only recall a few of these memories in my life: the days both of my kids were born, 9-11, when princess Diana died, and June 6th, 2019, the day my dad was killed at work.

You never really think of how much time you will have with your loved ones. Losing a parent at any age knocks the ground out from underneath you. It didn't seem possible something could happen to my dad. When I was growing up, and even as an adult, my dad was my hero. He could do anything, fix anything, build anything, and crack the stupidest dad jokes followed by this goofy little giggle that would make us all roll our eyes and laugh. Every time. My dad and I were two peas in a pod. As my auntie said, I was his boy. I took an interest in his interests because he was so easy to be with and talk to. I knew beyond a doubt how much I was loved. He showed love in acts of kindness and service. There wasn't a thing we asked of him, that he wasn't game for. For instance, in the fall of 2018, we had only been in our house for three months when our hot water heater decided to give out and flood the basement. My husband was at work, an hour away. So, my go-to, my first call always, was dad.



Stephen Brown

My parents only live a couple blocks from us, so he literally ran over and got to work. He knew exactly what to do and kept me calm. That was him, though, for his family, there instantly without question. In fact, the running joke between my sister and me is, if our husbands didn't want to start a house project, we'd say "it's ok, I'll just ask my dad." That was enough to motivate them because they knew he would do anything for us.

Dad taught my sister and me so much over the years and refused to treat us like princesses. He taught us how to change the oil on the car, drive a stick shift and rotate the tires. The rite of passage in our house was; he took all four tires off the car and then had us put them back on before we could drive it. He raised his daughters to be strong, capable women and for that we will be forever grateful. Since he's been gone, every time I encounter a problem that I would nor-

mally default to calling him, I think to myself, ok now, how can I figure this out and do it myself? I think that would make him proud. I know he watches over us too, which brings me comfort. Twice now, while hosting a family gathering, my sister and I were in the kitchen prepping the food when all of a sudden, my coffee maker grinder turned on. Neither of us were near the coffee maker. The first time it happened we looked at each other kind of shocked. My sister said, "Do you think that was dad?" The second time it happened, we both laughed and just said "hi dad!" Could be faulty wiring...but we like to think it was his way of telling us he's there with us, through the coffee maker, his best buddy.

The day that changed our lives, June 6th, 2019, I was at work when my mom phoned me. It was rare that my mom phoned me at work, so I was caught off guard. When I answered I

knew instantly something was wrong. She was frantic and I couldn't understand anything she was saying except "there was an accident!" My mind automatically went to my two-year-old son, who had already made a few trips to the ER, but when she said "your dad..." I couldn't comprehend it. My dad? What kind of accident? A car accident? Isn't he at work? My mind was spinning. She didn't have any details, just that there was an accident at work, and he was being taken to the hospital. I hung up and was shaking. I knew I had to go to meet my mom at the hospital and find out more, but for some reason, I finished up what I was doing, and then slowly gathered my things to leave. I wasn't thinking clearly and took SO many wrong turns, but when I pulled into the lot, my sister was pulling in at the exact same time so we were able to walk in together. When we asked about Steve Brown, we were taken into a consultation room where a doctor and social worker were waiting. At that point, we knew. Everyone experiences grief in a unique way. My mom quietly sobbed, my sister threw her bag across the room, I screamed "WHAT HAPPENED!?!?"

My dad, an experienced machinist who just celebrated his 60th birthday, was hit by a 25-lb bearing block when it flew out of the lathe he was working on. The solid chunk of metal hit him directly in the chest, likely killing him immediately. I had the opportunity to speak to his co-workers after the incident. Most of them were younger than him, mentored by him over the years, with young families at home. One young man, tears in his eyes, explained to my mom, sister and me, how he ran to my dad screaming his name, but he was unresponsive. He tried to get a pulse and when he couldn't, he froze up and didn't know what to do, so he screamed for help "Call 911!". He said he felt so guilty

that he couldn't think on his feet and help my dad more. The truth was, no matter how hard he would have tried, he wouldn't have been able to help him, but that doesn't make his trauma and guilt any less. More of his coworkers gathered around and they managed to get an AED on him, which delivered two shocks, but there was still no response. When the paramedics came, they put an automatic chest compressor on my dad. His coworkers who were there said they still think about it, how loud it was, how aggressive it seemed. The paramedics worked on him for another 30 minutes before transporting him to the hospital. The doctors told us that he was pronounced dead very shortly after arriving. By the time my mom got that call, he was already gone.

There was an investigation that took just over a year. They found no negligence within the company's safety program, and it was ruled an operator error. I couldn't understand how this could be purely operator error; my dad worked so safely! He was known as the guy who always took the extra step for safety and never cut corners. Measured twice, three times and cut once, with guards in place and safety glasses on. We were unbelievably angry with this outcome. We felt my dad's death was in vain and no lessons were learned to prevent other workers from suffering this fate. I filed an appeal, but nothing came of it and we had to accept that what happened may have been something my dad just missed.

We were introduced to Threads of Life through our WCB case manager. The support we have received through the Threads of Life community has been such a gift. Being surrounded by people who fully understand what it means to lose a loved one in such a sudden and violent way, makes you feel less alone. We've

joked in our Threads of Life training that we can be completely ourselves, dark humour and all, because we've "trauma bonded." Far too many people suffer in the wake of these incidents. Not just the families, but communities and coworkers.

The fact of the matter is, we are all human and humans make silly errors because of so, so many reasons. Was he thinking about weekend plans? Was he tired; did he have brain fog which made him forget a crucial step? As a result of my dad's death, I took the steps to change my career. I work as a safety coordinator now and I unfortunately can say that safety is still seen as an inconvenient step that workplaces must comply with. As much as you think the company will keep you safe, you are your own safety advocate and have to be thinking about it constantly. When you go to work, make a conscious effort to focus and consider all hazardous angles. Do this for yourself, your coworkers, your family, the people that love you and whose lives will be shattered without you in them. All it takes is a moment. A split second and your life could be taken or forever changed.

I was fortunate enough to have my dad by my side for most of my big life moments; graduation, my wedding, meeting both of my kids, buying my first home, etc.

Selfishly though, I could have used a few more decades with him.



Steve with his grandkids

“I make a wish with all my might...”

by **Shelly Kuris**

My daughter wrote a poem when she was 11. She was just 7 years old when she lost her father, my husband.

*“When I close my eyes at night,
I make a wish with all my might,
that my dad will come home safe
to me,
do you think that could ever be?”*

Sam and I met at Fleming College in Lindsay Ontario. Although neither of us ended up working in the fields we trained in, it was a worthwhile experience because we met and fell in love. It was always Sam’s dream to go out west and after saving for a year, we packed up our belongings and headed out.

We settled in the Vancouver area and actually arrived the night of the Stanley Cup riots, so it was an interesting introduction to the city. Despite our respective families saying “we will see you in six months”, we settled, married, bought a house and had three beautiful children.

Although money was tight, we did a lot of things together as a family and life was good. When we first moved out west, Sam worked in construction. Eventually he got his welding ticket and later trained to be a Millwright, which is an industrial mechanic. He loved his job and enjoyed spending time with us. Just after our youngest



Sam loved to barbecue

was born, we bought a larger fixer-upper in the country and Sam loved our little piece of land, even though it was a lot of work and further out of the city for him to travel to work.

The day that Sam died started like any other. It was a Saturday and Sam was going to work to move equipment out of a warehouse with a fellow employee. The company was closing down their local warehouse site to save money. The warehouse sat on a very large, valuable piece of land that was being sold. Sam kissed me goodbye as he left and told me to call him, as he did every morning. That day I had an appointment with my daughter downtown and a number of errands to run. I left my oldest at home with our youngest while I did my errands. Before I left, Sam called me to tell me that things were going well and they had one more piece of equipment to move and then they would be breaking for breakfast. That was the last time I spoke to my husband.

The piece of equipment they were moving was a wrapper, a very large and heavy piece of equipment. When it was installed it had an eye on the

top and was set in place with a crane. After installation, the eye was removed. The shut-down budget did not include the cost of bringing in a crane.

As a grocery warehouse, the plant had a number of forklifts that were used to pick orders. The plant had a partial exemption for seatbelts when order picking, for efficiency. Since all the forklifts at the plant had a safety feature that prevented them from operating without buckling the seatbelt, the seatbelts were disabled. Sam and his partner Mike used two forklifts in tandem, because the machine was too heavy to lift with one. They lifted the wrapper a couple inches off the floor and slowly moved across the warehouse floor towards the loading dock. Part-way across the floor, there was a seam in the concrete and when the forklifts drove over the seam, the load shifted. Sam’s forklift spun out. In accordance with the forklift training manual, Sam did not jump. Instead, he held on as the forklift spun around and he remained in the cab. Then the forklift tipped and only then, did Sam fall out and the machine landed on

him, the roof of the forklift crushing his skull.

Sam and I shared a cell phone and he had it with him. Although the accident happened at approximately 10 am, I continued to do my errands, oblivious to what had happened. The police came to the door twice before I came home and my oldest, Jack, answered the door. I remember being relieved when I pulled up to the house that Sam was not home yet because I had pizza and I didn't want him waiting for his dinner. When I came in, Jack gave me the card with the police officer's name on it. Confused, I called and the police officer said she was heading over, telling me nothing. That was when I tried calling Sam on his cell. He didn't answer. Then I called his friend Mike who he was working with. My husband had this frustrating habit of only putting the first name of his friends in our phone book and I called the wrong Mike. The other Mike just said, "I am so sorry, Shelly". I remember saying, "Sorry?? Sorry about what?" And then repeating it... and he said "you mean you haven't heard?" and then the police came to the door and I don't really remember specifics after that except that it was terrible and shocking and awful and devastating. Jack was 11, Silver was 7 and Liam was just 4.

Afterwards was really hard. There was the practical part. We lived in a house in the country and whenever anything went wrong, Sam would fix it. I used to joke with my train buddies that our new house was like a present, every time we opened it up, we would get a surprise because nothing was simple. Now I had to figure it all out by myself. And being a single parent of three young children, devastated by the loss of their Daddy was not easy either. But the hardest part wasn't all that. All that was just hard work. And I have never been afraid of hard work. The hardest part was not having

him with me, with us. Him kissing me goodbye in the morning before going to work, calling me throughout the day to tell me he loved me, cuddling in bed at night, sharing stories. Doing things together as a family. That is the hardest part.

It is hard to believe it has been 12 years since Sam died. The journey of grief is a long one and it is different for every one of us. After Sam died, sometimes when I saw someone operating a forklift unsafely or without a seatbelt I would stop and tell them about Sam. I guess that was my anger phase. Once I did that and the receptionist asked me if my name was Shelly. She said she would go out and talk to the operator immediately. I thought then that maybe, just maybe, things could change, if she knew who I was without me telling her. Maybe I was making a difference.

My oldest, Jack, struggled a lot in his teens, despite attending many counselling sessions. For a long time he felt guilty because that day he was playing with his brother and didn't realize something bad had happened when the police came to the door. Now he is in a good place; this year he graduated from an Aviation Flight Management Program and is working towards becoming a commercial airline pilot.

My daughter Silver, who has her Daddy's personality, which warms my heart, wrote a poem and presented it at a Fallen Workers Day ceremony in

BC. She is currently in Concurrent Education at Queens University and while she misses her dad so much, she is strong and resilient and is doing great. Liam, the baby, doesn't remember as much and will be applying to university soon. As for me, since my life trajectory has changed so much with the loss of Sam, I decided to go back to school to become a nurse and I have been practising for two years now. The plan was to grow old with Sam and I knew I needed something to keep me engaged.

I know that Sam loved us very much and did not go to work that day intending to die on the job. He was a safe worker and had no qualms about refusing unsafe work. I believe that he believed that the worst that could happen that day was the machine would tip; he did not anticipate that the machine would spin. At the end of the day, it is still a tragedy and is one I would not wish on my worst enemy.

I connected with Threads of Life approximately four years ago and I have attended Family Forums almost every year since with my daughter. This year, I decided to give back by becoming a member of the Speakers Bureau and sharing our story because even one death or workplace injury is too many.

To quote my daughter's wish, in her poem, "I would create a workplace, where no-one would get hurt, it would be like magic, do you think it would work?"



Shelly with their children after Sam's death

YOUR HEALING TOOLKIT



How to do a body scan meditation

Why is this tool helpful after a workplace tragedy?

A body scan is a mindfulness technique. It can help you calm and quiet your brain, and this can help to manage stress. By bringing attention to every part of your body in sequence, you may be able to release physical tension and better connect your mind and body. If you've ever wanted to try meditation, a body scan is a great first step.

How can I get started

- Sit in a comfortable position, in a chair with your hands in your lap. You can lie on your back if that's better for you.
- Close your eyes.
- Slow your breathing down by taking a few deep breaths.
- Notice your feet - anything you're feeling in your toes, your soles, the tops of your feet: cold or warmth, the feel of your socks, any pain or discomfort. If you feel any tension or pain, try to imagine your breath reaching that part of your body, and the tension or pain leaving your body through your breath.
- Now move up from your feet to your ankles and lower legs. Do the same, noticing any sensations or discomfort.
- Gradually move all the way up through every part of your body until you get to your head. If you like you can work your way back down to your feet, noticing each part of your body.



Free Resources

- There are plenty of free and paid apps for your phone or tablet. We like smilingmind.com.au. It's free and only asks you for a donation from time to time.
- Most public libraries will have a book or two on meditation, and the body scan will be part of that.
- Visit <https://www.verywellmind.com/body-scan-meditation-why-and-how-3144782>
- This is an app that covers many relaxation and therapeutic techniques, there is a fee but you can try it for free <https://www.calm.com>

Volunteer Profile: Tammy McCabe

by **Dwayne Boyd**, Regional Development Coordinator
Atlantic Canada and Quebec

Passion refers to a strong feeling of enthusiasm or excitement towards something or doing something. Tammy McCabe is a dedicated volunteer who exemplifies deep passion about a cause.

Tammy was first introduced to Threads of Life in 2010, and she took part in the inaugural St. John's Steps for Life walk. When Tammy's employer encouraged her to get involved, she quickly realized that the organization's values aligned with her personal and professional values and she responded that "I was all in!"

This year marks her 15th anniversary of participating in the walk, clearly illustrating the philosophy of being "all in". However, she is not just a participant and advocate for workplace safety, she has been a member of the Steps for Life walk planning committee for the past 15 years, serving as committee chairperson since 2023. Her passion for volunteering with Threads of Life comes from at least three different sources:

- She believes that as a safety professional, "my responsibility does not end at the workplace".
- She cares a great deal about people and is a strong believer in giving back to the community.
- But more importantly, she wants "family members to see that there are lots of people out there who truly care that this tragedy has impacted their family".

After experiencing complicated grief, she understands the importance of having diverse support systems and has found that Threads of Life meets that need.

As a volunteer, one of her cherished memories is when she got to introduce a young Occupational Health and Safety student to Threads of Life. She is delighted to see how he has grown as a safety professional and has become a member of the Threads of Life Speaker's Bureau. Witnessing this young man turning a tragedy into a career and using it as a tool to influence employees and employers, has truly "filled my cup".

Last year St. John's returned to an in-person walk after three years of virtual events. Although they planned conservatively, they had over 225 registrations and almost doubled their fundraising goal, raising \$45,432. Tammy vividly remembers the feeling of pride as she



Tammy McCabe with her dog Remy.

took the stage to stand with the committee at the end of the walk. However, she is not done yet!

Tammy strongly believes that volunteering is beneficial for our mental health and provides us with the opportunity to connect with "like-minded individuals and recognize our connection to humanity". She has exemplified this by volunteering with various organizations such as the Boy Scouts, Allied Youth, and most recently, serving as a director for the Newfoundland and Labrador Occupational Health and Safety Association.

If you were to ask Tammy today why one should volunteer, her response would be, "Just do it. It's good for your soul".

Tammy is a safety professional who is passionate about reducing workplace injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. Her goal is to ensure that families who have been affected by these things "feel seen and heard". She wants you to know that there are people who care about your loss and are working tirelessly to prevent it from happening again.

Marking National Volunteer Week

National Volunteer Week will be celebrated from April 14 to 20, 2024. During this week we celebrate not only our wonderful Threads of Life volunteers, but the 24 million Canadians who volunteer formally, or informally to make their communities a better place to live.

This year we look forward to hosting our Volunteer and Partner celebration event on Thursday, April 18 at 2:30 ET. Please save the date - your invitation will arrive in your inbox shortly.

Threads of Life is built on volunteerism. We appreciate our volunteers all year round, but National Volunteer Week is a special opportunity for us to express how much our volunteers mean to the organization.

Weaving a Tapestry of Hope



At Threads of Life, we believe that every act of kindness and generosity is a thread that, when combined with others, weaves a powerful tapestry of hope. In fact, we believe in this vision so much that we are now launching the Tapestry of Hope Club – a remarkable community of recurring donors who are at the heart of our mission.

When you become a member of the Tapestry of Hope, you become a lifeline for families in need. Your on-going support allows us to provide vital services, support, and resources to those who are navigating the aftermath of workplace tragedies. 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. For more information and to become a member, contact Threads of Life Director of Development Lorna Catrambone at 289-651-2988 or lcatrambone@threadsoflife.ca



Donors Like You: Liz Webley

Today we are shining a spotlight on Liz Webley, a long-time family member and member of our newly launched monthly donor club, **Tapestry of Hope**.

Liz's journey with Threads of Life began nearly two decades ago after the tragic loss of her husband, Dick Van Rooyen, who was killed while working on Highway 401 with his road construction crew. Later, when her second husband Fred Webley was diagnosed with a work-related lung disease, she continued to lean on the support and community she had found.

Below, Liz talks about her connection to Threads of Life, what it has meant to her over the years, and why she has chosen to be a member of the Tapestry of Hope, providing ongoing support for our programming.

Connection to Threads of Life

Along with her then-husband Fred, Liz participated in the second-ever Steps for Life walk in Toronto in 2006 and never looked back.

She became one of the organization's pioneering volunteers – first as a Volunteer Family Guide and then speaker. She felt called to mentor other widows in particular to help them process their grief. Liz reflects, "Over the years I was a Volunteer Family Guide for 28 widows. It meant so much to me because in helping them, I was also helping myself. For that I'm forever grateful."

Becoming a member of the **Tapestry of Hope**

As she has witnessed the organization's growth to a nationwide presence, Liz has remained deeply grateful for the continuous impact and essential role Threads of Life plays

in the lives of those affected by workplace tragedies.

Being able to support this continued growth has motivated Liz to become a recurring monthly donor. She sees her ongoing contributions as a means of ensuring the organization's longevity and its ability to continue to reach families from coast-to-coast.

She explains, "Seeing Threads of Life expand has been so great. It goes to show not only what an amazing organization it is, but also how much it is needed. Threads of Life has been such a huge support in my lifetime and I'm so glad that more families will be able to have that support too."

"It's not just about my loss, my widowhood, or even my lifetime. Workers and their families are still suffering, and I want to make sure they know about Threads of Life and how it can support them. That's the main reason it's important to me to provide ongoing support."

A legacy of support

Liz views her ongoing donations as a legacy of support that transcends her own lifetime. She emphasizes the fact that while workers are still being injured, made ill, or killed on the job, Threads of Life is still needed.

She says, "It's not just about my loss, my widowhood, or even my lifetime. Workers and their families are still suffering, and I want to make sure they know about Threads of Life and how it can support them. That's the main reason it's important to me to provide ongoing support."

As a proud member of the **Tapestry of Hope**, Liz's commitment underscores the vital role Threads of Life plays in providing hope, healing, and a sense of community to those affected by workplace tragedies across Canada.

A marathon of healing

Injured worker raising awareness for invisible injuries.

When Travis Roszell was first injured at work, there's no question his injuries were visible – devastatingly visible to him and all his family and friends. Travis had been working on construction of a water park and was conducting a hydrostatic pressure test when a pipe overpressurized and burst. The impact shattered most of the bones in his face. His family was told he might not survive the night.

Travis is now a Threads of Life family member, and one of our newest volunteer speakers. After months in hospital, rehab and countless surgeries, you would hardly guess when you see him, the gravity of those injuries. But today, it's the injuries you can't see that Travis wants to focus on.

“I suffered a mild to moderate traumatic brain injury,” he says. “This, I would learn, changed more than my physical appearance. The injury to my frontal lobe made me a different person. I didn't react to things the same way, I didn't feel the same about things that I once did. I would easily get frustrated and angered with myself and my capabilities. I became very emotional, unable to deal with my feelings and understand what or why this was happening. This change proved to be almost as hard if not harder than the physical change in my appearance.”

Trying to find a way to cope with the turmoil and pain, Travis realized he survived his injuries for a reason and found a new purpose: he is not only needed by his family and friends; he is needed by others who are experiencing what he lived through.

“I need to share my experience to let others know they are not alone. There are people that care,” he says. And he's planning to do that in a very concrete, and inspiring way. Starting in June, Travis will be running from Sherwood Park Alberta to Victoria BC, raising awareness and promoting both Networks Activity Centre Society of Alberta, which provides programs for people surviving a brain injury, and Threads of Life. Travis will be speaking at the Steps for Life walk in Edmonton May 4.

“The goal behind doing this run is to raise awareness and promote these organizations to help other people overcome and deal with the things that I struggled to



Travis trains and runs in all weather

deal with on my own,” Travis says. “My buddy Nick and I were running, and I had this great idea. I turned to Nick and I'm like, ‘hey, should we plan a run to the coast?’ We joked about it and talked about it, but it was never anything really serious until recently, and it was like ‘let's do it.’”

Doing it will mean a 42-km run every day “for as long as it takes to get from Edmonton to Victoria”, likely 41 days barring injury or rest days..

Travis hopes people will come and join him for segments of his run. You can learn more at his website, invisibleinjury.ca. The online map will show what day he expects to be in each community along the route. You'll be able to follow his progress day by day.

On top of his brain injury, Travis deals with loss of hearing in one ear, reduced sight in one eye, loss of sense of smell and taste, tinnitus and migraines. “The injury that I sustained is far more than I realized at the time, so much more to learn.” he says. “We all have good days and bad days, but we do things with a purpose now.”

“It's going to be hard,” he adds of his marathon run, “but when you get to the end, to that finish line or to that goal, it'll be so worth it.”

It's time to...

register for Steps for Life 2024. Walks are planned for 30+ communities across Canada, or plan your own with our National Online Steps for Life event.

Sign up today at [stepsforlife.ca!](https://stepsforlife.ca)

Setting a safety example through Steps for Life



Tara (rt.), with her sister, her son and her nephew

Many people participate in Steps for Life—Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy because they are personally affected by a death, serious injury or illness in their family. Others take part because it aligns with their career and their professional values. For this year's Steps for Life national spokesperson, Tara Elliott, both reasons apply.

Tara's dad Stephen Brown was killed at work in 2019 (you can read Tara's story on pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter). She changed to a career in health and safety as a result.

"Every day in Canada, one to three people will be killed at work or die as a result of occupational disease," Tara says, "and hundreds more will be seriously injured or made ill because of work, but with those deaths, injuries and illnesses there are thousands of family members, friends and co-workers changed forever."

Tara and her family joined Threads of Life very soon after her dad's death. Last fall Tara completed training to join the speaker's bureau, and this spring she will serve as family spokesperson for Steps for Life in Regina, as well as spokesperson nationally.

"The support we have received through the Threads of Life community has been such a gift," she says. "The organization has provided support by connecting us with families who are in very similar situations to my family. Something I didn't realize was that being surrounded by

people who fully understand what it means to lose a loved one in such a sudden and violent way, makes you feel less alone. Far too many people suffer in the wake of these incidents. Not just the families, but their communities and their coworkers."

In addition to honouring those changed lives, Tara believes Steps for Life is vital because of the opportunity it offers, to build a culture of health and safety nationally. Her safety message to all of us is: "Set a safety example for everyone around you and set a minimum standard for yourself...Make a conscious effort to focus and consider all hazardous angles. Do this for yourself, your coworkers, your family, the people that love you and whose lives will be shattered without you in it."

CCOHS team the 'Heart and Sole' of Steps for Life

One of the exciting aspects of Steps for Life is seeing the companies, organizations and family groups who step up to be part of the Team Challenge. New teams join the challenge each year, and many come back year after year to demonstrate their health and safety commitment, and make a difference for those affected by work-related tragedy. Team Challenge contenders compete to raise the most funds for Threads of Life. You can be part of the Team Challenge too! Learn more at stepsforlife.ca.

One of the longest-running challengers is the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health (CCOHS) and Safety with their Heart and Soles team. CCOHS offers some pointers for other teams hoping to be part of the Steps for Life Team Challenge:

"CCOHS first officially participated in the 2007 Steps for Life Hamilton walk as part of the local organizing committee and as walkers, and has every year since," says Lynda Brown, Manager of Communications Services



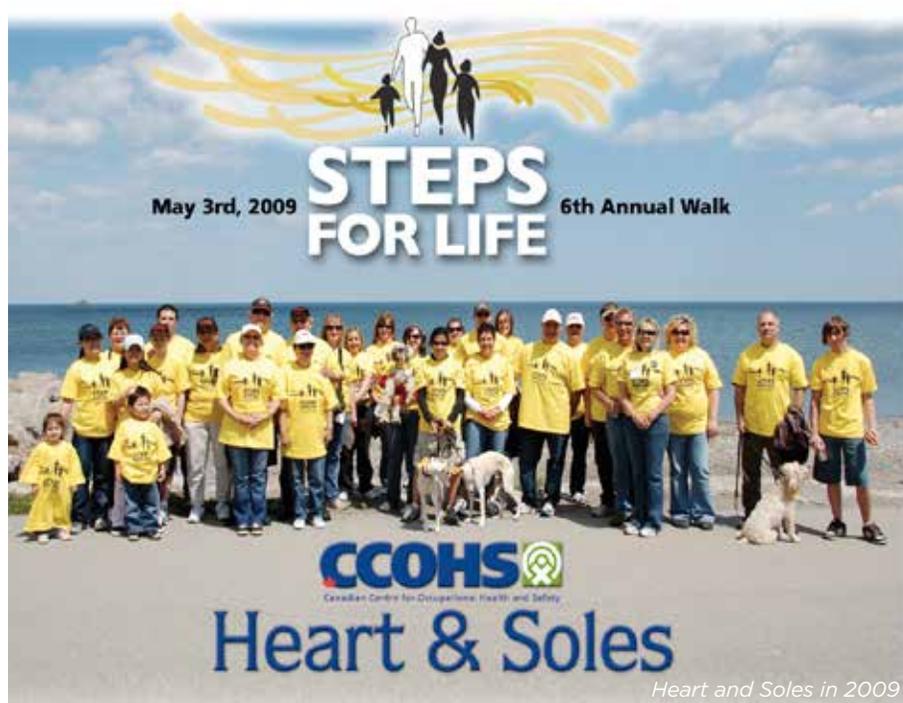
for CCOHS. CCOHS staff also continue to sit on the planning committee for Steps for Life in Hamilton.

“We are connected to the cause of Threads of Life and it represents the ‘why’ in the work we do at CCOHS – to prevent further workplace tragedies,” she adds. “We walk to remember and honour those who have been lost to workplace injuries and illnesses and to renew our commitment to protecting workers.”

The Heart and Soles team’s involvement is not a one-day effort either. CCOHS president Anne Tennier begins with a message in January to rally the staff to participate with their families and friends.

“She reinforces the impacts of these tragedies and the work of Threads of Life,” says Brown. “We post pictures from past events and promote the event at our departmental meetings. It starts from the top down with the leadership team who show up and encourage their staff to do the same.

Having a team name helps. Everyone wants to belong to the Heart and Soles.”If you’d like to join the Steps for Life Team Challenge, learn more by visiting stepsforlife.ca, or call one of our Regional Development Coordinators at 888-567-9490



Upcoming Events

Atlantic Family Forum May 31-June 2

Central Family Forum Sept 27-29

Western Family Forum Oct 25-27

Families Connect online workshops

threadsoflife.ca/families-connect

- How can we help you? Intro to Threads of Life -More dates for these sessions are added regularly. Check the website.
- How to craft a Memory Book - April 24
- Getting Past the "What Ifs" after a Trauma or Death - May 22
- Do you have a grief season? - June 26

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 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 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.