



## When tragedy enters the sibling relationship

Siblings can be best friends and bitter enemies – all in one day. And when work-related tragedy strikes, it has profound effects on this relationship. In this issue we focus on how brothers and sisters cope when their sibling is injured or killed on the job.



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### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

*Karen Lapierre Pitts*

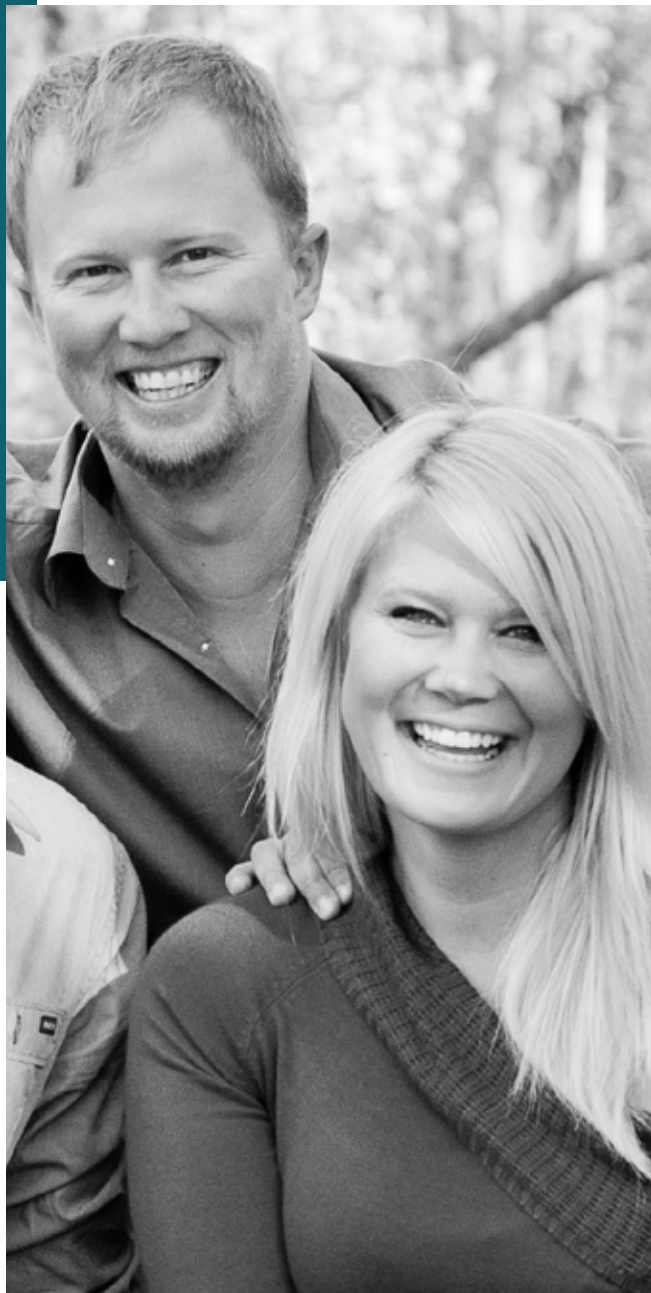
It seems like a good fit that my first message as chair of the Threads of Life board of directors is in an issue about siblings. It was the death of my brother Jamie that brought me to Threads of Life 15 years ago. As the writers in this issue share, siblings often feel misunderstood in their grief. Threads of

Life offers a safe place to land, where others do understand. As we often hear at family forums, no person's story is "worse" than any other – your own story is the worst, because it's your experience. We hope that this issue will find its way into the hands of new family members who will find solace in knowing that others are travelling a similar journey.

As I take over the chair's position, I know I have big shoes to fill. Thank you to Eleanor Westwood who served as chair for the past two years, and who will continue on the board. As members, participants and supporters of Threads of Life, I invite your ideas and input, and look forward to serving you as we guide the organization forward.

# MY VERY FIRST FRIEND

by Nicole Lazaruk



Nikki and Bryan

**S**ibling relationships are complex. With me and my brothers, we were friends, teammates, competitors and sometimes enemies. My childhood memories are those of camping trips, watching their hockey games, playing in our tree fort and ski trips. My adult memories were filled with Sunday dinners together, board games with lots of laughs, baseball games, sharing in the excitement of weddings and first babies. Sharing all these moments with my brother Bryan was amazing. I never thought that something could break that.

November 28, 2012 – I still remember

the knock on the door like yesterday. I instantly knew that something was wrong the moment I saw my younger brother Derek. I knew that whatever it was, my family would never be the same. Once I heard the news that my older brother Bryan was gone I remember thinking about everyone else: how will my parents get through this, it is their worst nightmare to lose a child. How will my sister-in-law support and care for my nieces as a single parent while grieving his loss? It was days later when I finally had time to think, what about me? My brother is gone. This is someone who I had known for 27 years. He was my very first friend.

I believe that sibling grief is often misunderstood by parents, families, friends and sometimes even other siblings. It is often overshadowed by the grief of other family members such as parents who have lost a child, possibly a spouse who has lost their partner, or children who may have lost a parent. It is important to always remember that although the loss is different, it is not more nor

less and that there may be others suffering as well. It is important to just be there and support each other when such tragedy occurs.

“How are your parents?” “How is Bryan’s wife and his girls?” These are common questions people would ask, and although I have always appreciated the fact that they genuinely care about our family and want to know, it was not common for someone to say “I am sorry to hear about your brother, how are YOU doing?”

Not only did I lose my older brother, but in a way I also lost many other pieces of my family. Family dynamics have been forever

changed. Since we lost Bryan our family gatherings have never been the same. There are no more regular Sunday dinners, and far less games and laughter. We really try and make the most of our time together, but you can tell that we have all been changed deeply by this loss.

I remember there were certain milestones in life that were the some of the hardest for me. One was my 31st birthday. This was when I had officially lived longer than Bryan had. It is hard to know he is missing his daughters growing up, as well as my two children who miss their uncle dearly. It is heartbreaking that he never got a chance to see my younger brother Derek get married or to meet his baby girl, and he missed the chance to watch my littlest brother Jackson grow into the young man he is today.

Family members all grieve differently, and will all have their own response to death. In our family it has always been important that we have open communication with each other and are able to talk about Bryan.

“ It was not common for someone to say “I am sorry to hear about your brother, how are YOU doing?”

There are a number of ways I cope with the loss of my brother. I find talking about my feelings and talking openly about Bryan helps. I have also found comfort in certain things that make me think of him – for me these have always been blue jays and dragonflies. When I see them I can’t help but think that he is with me.

I also attend the Threads of Life family forums. They are always a great, safe place where I can grieve and cope with this loss openly, with other families, and other siblings that are going through the same thing. Threads of life has helped me heal in so many different ways.

# THE QUESTIONS I WISH I COULD ASK

by Shelby Sandford

A common phrase that I'm sure we've all heard is "It gets easier with time." Although it is true that the grieving process is not linear, I have found that as more time passes and as I mature, the grieving process has become more difficult.

When my brother Jimmy died I was nine, I was a child. When I was nine years old, I knew what I liked to do. However I didn't know what my passions were in life – most children at that age don't. I had my friends, dance, I liked to read and draw. Although I know he really liked me, those things aren't really relatable to a 30-year-old man. To me, Jimmy was the coolest babysitter ever. I remember racing him in his backyard, and unlike the other adults, he never let me win. I remember roughhousing and calling him "Jungle Jim" as I hung off of him like a little monkey. As a positive older influence in my life, Jimmy was as good as it gets. But we weren't friends yet, because I was too young.

Now at 22 years old, I find myself stopping in my tracks sometimes and thinking, "Wow, I am a lot like Jim." So many parts of our personalities are the same; we just didn't know it yet.

I find solace in really difficult hikes, the sweaty ugly ones. I find reward in the work that comes with being strategically prepared, down to the last freeze-dried snack. I know that Jimmy was an all-season up-north camper. I've seen the pictures and heard so many stories, but I find myself wanting to ask him why he liked it so much. I wonder, was it the challenge? Did he winter camp because it was harder and more rewarding, or was it just easier to get his buddies together then? Did being outside and surrounded by the wildlife give him the same feeling that it gives me? It's hard to put that feeling into words, but if we both got it, we'd know.

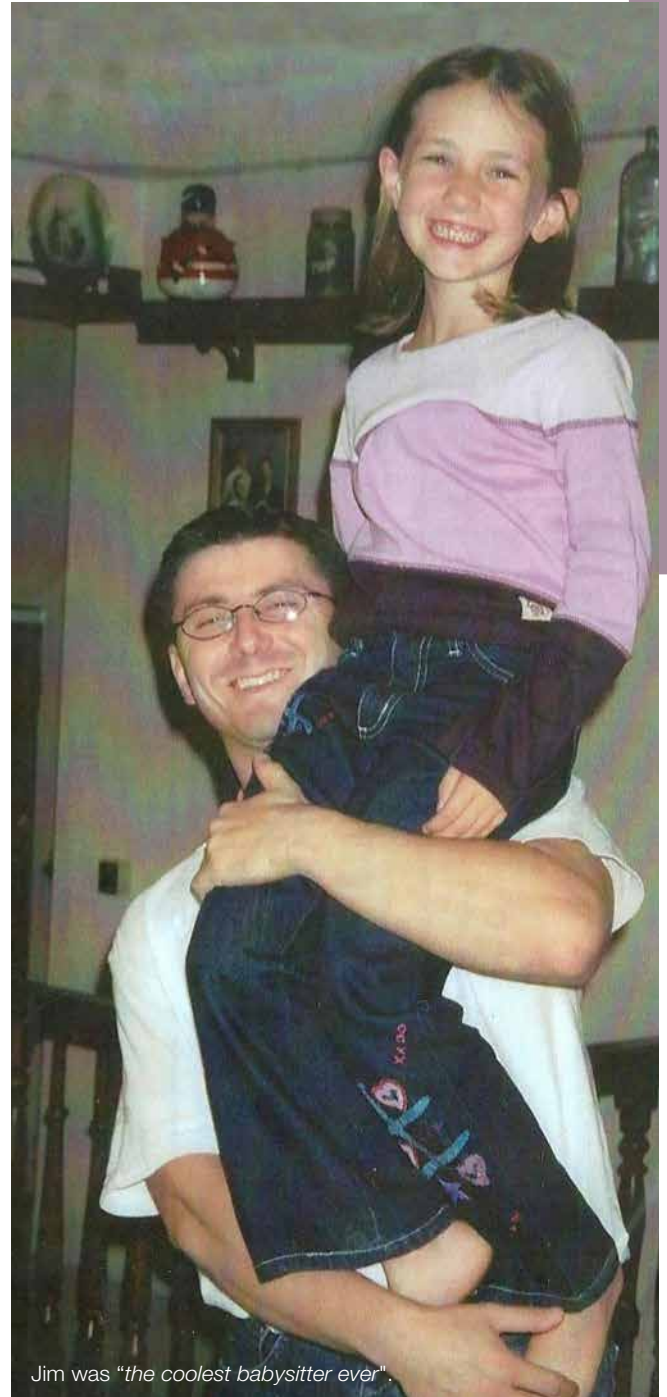
When Jimmy was around I knew I liked reading and writing; I loved school. But now I know that I have a constant desire to read more, learn more, and just take in more. I hear Dad talking about Jim's thirst for learning new things, and again wonder "why?" You don't often hear about someone who genuinely loves going to school.

Did he get the same feeling as me when a new thing clicked? Was he driven to expand his mind and grow as a person? These weren't conversations I was old enough to have, at the time.

When he passed, my grief counselor inspired me to go to Western for psychology and become a counselor myself. Twenty years prior to me, Jimmy also got a Social Science BA degree from Western. I remember in my first year anthropology class we discussed gift giving for holidays and how it can be problematic. I came home for a break and told Mom that I wasn't sure if I wanted to do presents that year for Christmas. She told me that when Jimmy was in school, he also came home and said he didn't want presents, he wanted that money to go towards charity. So badly I wish I could talk to him about that. Did he take the same course? Was it that class that changed his opinion, or something else? What other courses stuck with him and changed his worldview? Was he lost when he graduated, too?

When we talk about our grief, we often speak of the things that we miss out on as individuals. For me, I'm missing bonding over these connections with him. Aside from my own individual loss, Jim is missing out too. He's missed out on his grown up little sister, who doesn't need a hot and ready pizza and a rented movie to be entertained. I feel like with the similarities that are so deeply rooted in our personalities, Jim and I would be genuine friends.

I love Threads of Life so much because it's stressed that although we are all here with common ground, no loss is the same. My own individual loss differs from that of the rest of my family, but it has also changed over time, as I grow older without him. When I was younger, I had lost my



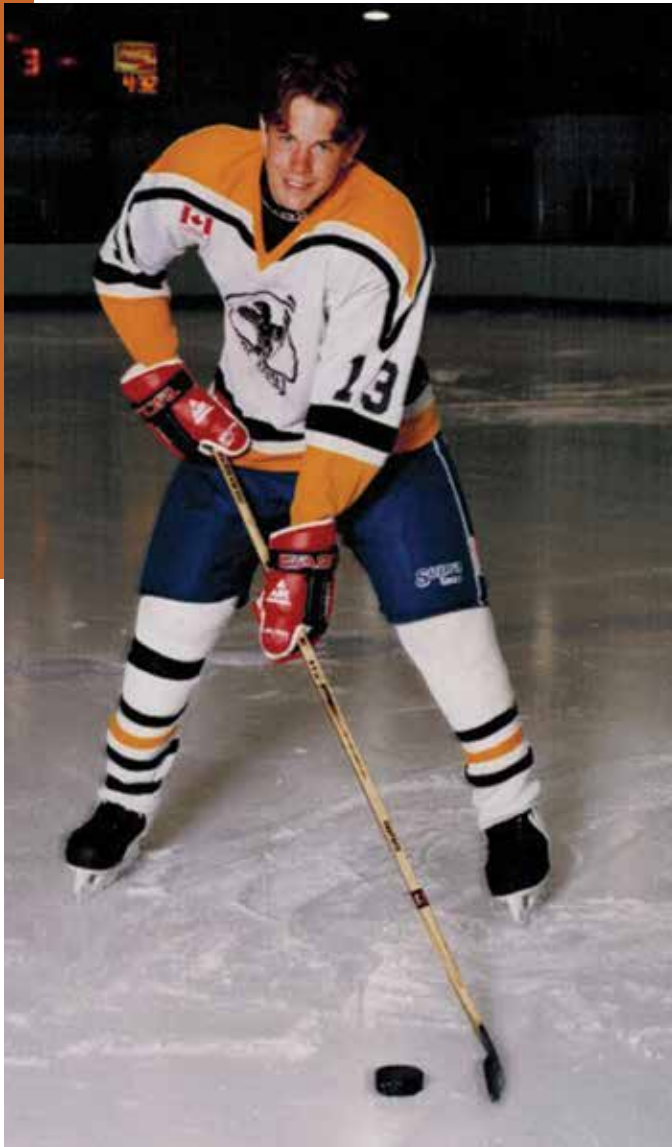
Jim was "the coolest babysitter ever".

big brother who was my favourite babysitter and was such a good role model. Now, I have lost a friend who would truly understand me.

I am so thankful for Threads of Life serving as an outlet for me over the years, as I have grown from a child to an adult. My grieving process is a journey that I will be on forever, and it's really hard to put into words how thankful I am that Threads of Life will be there with me...but you guys get it.

# THE BLACKOUT

by Sarah Wheelan



Fifteen years ago, the lights went out across the entire eastern seaboard, in what is still known simply as “the blackout”. My brother Lewis died that night - sometime in the early morning hours of August 15, 2003. He was 21 years old.

I still get choked up talking about how he died, in any terms more specific than the highest level: that he received severe electrical burns on the second day of his summer job. That he survived what were considered to be virtually unsurvivable injuries. That our entire family was reeling as we navigated the emotional rollercoaster of his injury and rehabilitation. That he was making gains in healing – physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually – and then he died. That he died so young is tragic. How he died is (still) inconceivable.

Death brings a finality. A full stop. We’re abruptly faced with the reality without their physical presence and the visceral scream from having someone we love ripped from our lives.

And: his death was not more painful than watching him suffer and grieve his able-bodied life.

My brother suffered. He lived with his injuries for more than two years, enduring tremendous pain. On top of the physical pain, he was faced with waking up to a body deeply ravaged by burns, and the incomprehensible process of learning how to live with having his mobility, independence, and athletic capabilities stripped away violently.

There really aren’t words for what it was like to witness his pain. To watch him grieve the life he lost. Feeling the acute pain of watching someone you love suffer in a way that can’t even be described. To watch my parents struggling to remain “strong” for him. Trying – valiantly – to do the same.

Fifteen years later, I’m still struggling to put the experience into words, but I’m trying for one very important reason. Death doesn’t erase the pain of what came before. There is comfort in knowing his suffering is over – and it doesn’t make living with the memories of what he lived through any easier to carry. Lewis’ grief is now over, but for our family and friends, it will continue. There is no time-limit on grief. We continue to grieve the life he lost - twice over.

*Lewis Wheelan in his bantam year of hockey.*

## The Gate

by Marie Howe

From *What the Living Do* (W. W. Norton, 1997). Copyright © 1997 by Marie Howe. Used with the permission of the author.

I had no idea that the gate I would step through  
to finally enter this world

would be the space my brother’s body made. He was  
a little taller than me: a young man

but grown, himself by then,  
done at twenty-eight, having folded every sheet,

rinsed every glass he would ever rinse under the cold  
and running water.

This is what you have been waiting for, he used to say to me.  
And I’d say, What?

And he’d say, This—holding up my cheese and mustard sandwich.  
And I’d say, What?

And he’d say, This, sort of looking around.

# ROBBED OF THE FUTURE

by Paulette Raymond

I'm different now. I know it. No sense trying to hide it or putting on some kind of pretense. Losing my brother changed me right to the very core of my soul.

“ He died alone that night in September, without his big sister, without all the people that loved him. Alone. I feel in many ways that's the crux of the matter here. I'm terrified.

I was his oldest sister, the one who took care of him, the one that he looked up to.

I walked him to school, helped him with homework, tucked him in at night. This complicated my grieving. Still does. You see, I lost my brother but in many ways I feel like I lost my child too. The gut-wrenching pain I felt the night of that phone call will stay with me always. Most of my memories of my brother are childhood ones. Of us building tree houses, fishing on the pier, getting into trouble diving for coins in the fountain at The Public Gardens. Those memories get me through each day. They are like gold.

He died alone that night in September, without his big sister, without all the people that loved him. Alone. I feel in many ways that's the crux of the matter here. I'm terrified. That something will happen to one of my kids and I won't be able to get to them in time, and they will die alone too. For the first three years, this was my life.

Never wanting to be more than ten minutes away from my kids at all times. Imagine how well that went over with a teenage girl and two young adults.

I could no longer drive across the bridge, no longer go to appointments that were more than ten minutes from my kids, no longer live a normal life. I suffered from panic attacks when I couldn't find my children, never resting until I heard their voice and knew



Paulette is Tommy's oldest sister.

they were ok. Throughout this entire process though, I knew what was happening. I knew I just had to work through it and I would be okay. So I did, and I am. Almost.

Sometimes I truly miss the person I used to be. She didn't carry this weight, she didn't know this pain. She didn't have this gaping hole where her heart used to be.

Grief has a way of weighing you down. It becomes this silent partner that sits on your shoulder. It can literally eat you alive if you let it. Don't. Don't let it.

My heart hurts for all of the things he will never do. The future he was robbed of. The family members he will never know. The joy of watching his son become a man.

I'm a "fixer" and this one time...when I needed it most...I couldn't fix this.

I couldn't bring him back, I couldn't undo

the horror of that night, I couldn't take away my family's pain.

I feel like I failed at being his sister. His protector. His confidant. Even though logic tells me that I couldn't have saved him that night, my heart tells me that I should have.

## Do you have a story to share?

If you've been personally affected by work-related tragedy, and would like to share your story in our newsletter, please email Susan Haldane at [shaldane@threadsoflife.ca](mailto:shaldane@threadsoflife.ca)



# What happens to siblings when workplace tragedy strikes?

by Sarah Wheelan

As a sister grieving the death of my younger brother to injuries he sustained on the job, I've spent a significant amount of time reflecting on sibling relationships – in all of their complexities – while I continue to learn how to live through and carry my own loss. What does it mean to be a sibling? How is the relationship different? How is sibling grief different? How is it universal?

When a workplace tragedy strikes, those most deeply affected are those at ground zero: family and close friends. Siblings affected range from those who never knew their brother or sister to those who've lived well into their adult years together. Some were close friends. Some had drifted apart or become estranged. Many had complicated relationships — with each other, with their in-laws, with their parents. When a sibling dies, as in any death, we grieve both the relationship we had and the one that we wanted.

All this to say sibling relationships are complicated, as is grieving the loss of a sibling. That said, there are some common themes that come up time and again for grieving siblings.

- 1. Overshadowed grief.** Siblings are sometimes referred to as the “forgotten mourners” — and for good reason. It's easy to feel like the forgotten one when your loss is eclipsed in the unfathomable shadow of child loss. As siblings, we've been on the receiving end of subtle and not-so-subtle assessments that our loss is somehow less than the “worse” losses of a child, a parent, or a spouse. The erasing of a sibling's experience can come in comments as inconspicuous as “I'm so sorry to hear about your brother. How are your parents?” Ranking pain as less or more only serves to take away others' entitlement to feel the depth of their own loss, so let's not do that.

2. **Loss of identity.** Feeling a loss of identity is a common in all kinds of losses, and is also a common struggle for grieving siblings. When we grow up being compared to each other — the generous/smart/creative/athletic/kind one — much of our identities are formed in comparison to our siblings. It seems inevitable that our identity would feel shaky in contrast to the void left in their absence.
3. **Life's longest relationship — cut short.** Our siblings are our first peers. Our first friends. They're also the ones that we expect will be with us through our life and all of its stages. Siblings are both the witnesses to our past and companions through our future. This is true at every age and life-stage. From early childhood until old age, we expect our siblings to be with us. To have that journey together cut short hurts deeply, and in a way that's best understood by other siblings.
4. **Ages and milestones.** When a sibling relays information about the death of a sister or brother, they will almost always include ages — their sibling's age when they died and their age when the death happened. While I've never seen this documented, I know I do it and I notice that other siblings list their ages — especially if they and/or their sibling was quite young. The death of a sibling breaks the natural order of things — just as the death of a child does. Death puts ages out of order. For your entire life, you've been almost two years apart in age — and then you are not. When a younger sibling passes the age of an older sibling who died, it breaks the order that should have been. For those who lost siblings at a young age, sharing our age can also provide a marker in our own development — the point where the carefree days of childhood were lost. Our siblings are always both the age they were when they died, and the age they'll never be.
5. **Shifting expectations and family dynamics.** How family dynamics shift following the death of a sibling is as unique as each family's particular composition of function and dysfunction. What's certain is that dynamics and expectations do shift when a family member dies — including a sibling. Surviving siblings may be expected to take on more responsibility — with parents, nieces and nephews, and even other siblings. Or you may feel invisible and like no one understands how you feel. You may suddenly feel the hyper-vigilant focus of your parents' attention — or the absence of their care and concern for you as they grieve their own deep loss.

While it's not an exclusive list, I've experienced all of these myself and had many of our sibling members share similar challenges and particular heart hurts. As a sibling, your grief is no less significant and heartbreaking than anyone else's. Sibling grief is as unique as your own sibling relationship, and no one knows exactly what you have lost like you do. That said, I hope you get to experience the validation of others who have lost a sibling — so you know that even in missing your irreplaceable brother or sister, you are not alone.

Looking to connect with another sibling? We have sibling Volunteer Family Guides and a siblings only session at most family forums. Connection with other siblings has been deeply healing and beneficial for so many of our sibling family members, including me, and we hope you'll reach out to connect with others who understand — as well as anyone can — what you've lost.

## Unforgettable.

Forget Me Not tells the stories of lives changed forever when a loved one was traumatically injured at work or diagnosed with an occupational disease. Use stories from Forget Me Not to set the stage for training, or hand them out to new hires during orientation. All proceeds go directly to Threads of Life support programs and services for families of workplace tragedy. To order, call 1-888-567-9490.





# Marking the milestones

by **Alex Tuff**

Besides turning the same age as your deceased siblings, other age-related events can be triggers as well. Graduating from college, buying your first car, getting married and having children can be milestones that turn bittersweet after a death of a sibling. In the normal course of events, older siblings get to do all those things first. Like many times in our lives, a certain level of guilt sets in for the younger siblings when they realize they are enjoying a privilege that their older sibling did not live long enough to enjoy themselves. No matter how much more I achieve, I'll always have the memories with my brother - the missing part of my life.

As the 5th-year anniversary creeps up, it feels as if I've achieved something. Do they give out medals for this sort of thing? The emotional roller coaster ride made that 18-year-old boy turn into a well-rounded young man who was forced to grow up and try to understand something that, at the time, made zero sense.

August 2018 marked five years since my big brother Kris was killed in an industrial accident while at work. He was instructed to enter a tank that had not been properly cleaned, to remove a baffle; a device used to restrain the flow of a fluid, liquid or gas. The baffle was double-walled with diesel fumes trapped inside. It's at that moment, an explosion occurred and Kris was fatally injured.

This is also the year when I'll be the same age as Kris was when he died. For some families who experience loss, they may find it difficult when their loved ones have been gone longer than they have been living. It's truly a weird concept when you get thinking about it! Does that officially make me the older one?

This unwanted milestone reminds me that life is too short to take for granted. I often wonder if me and Kris were the same person. Us being six years apart, when he was 24, I was only an immature 18-year-old boy. I couldn't even imagine being 24 at that point. While it was only six years apart, Kris' wisdom often led me to believe he was much older. But now, I wonder if our values and aspirations were alike. For myself, I'm looking at purchasing my first home and hopefully flying the coop, something that he was not given the opportunity to achieve.

While I don't agree with the cliché statement "things will get better", I can say, you learn to become the conductor of that roller coaster and allow yourself to feel that loss for as long as necessary. But you see, that's the little catch with grief. It sneaks up on you. One day you feel like you can master the world, and the next, the sky is falling around you. And that's okay! This is because sibling loss is so misunderstood. I know from my own experiences, I've received many messages that make you feel like you should be over it by now.

Most people don't understand sibling loss until they've reached their golden years and their siblings pass away of old age or other health-related causes. It's never about getting over the death, it's about getting out of bed every day, taking off the mask and rolling with the punches on your own time. Turning 24 will no doubt come with a fear that surpassing his age would be like moving on from the one person who could beat me up without getting in trouble like the little annoying brother I was.

The past few years have been pretty difficult, trying to find the new normal. While I was fortunate enough not to fall into a state of disrepair, I quickly found that self-care was the best medicine for me - eating a better diet, trying to exercise daily and reducing unneeded stress. It took me a while to understand that surpassing his age isn't moving on from the good and bad memories or even the struggles we shared along the way, but it's moving toward a brighter future while maintaining the mind set of who I was versus who I am today. I look forward to my future guilt-free accomplishments and knowing he would have been proud.



# Todd Smith

by **Lorna Catrambone**

Todd Smith is a passionate advocate for workplace safety and injury prevention. He has experienced first-hand the devastating effects of a workplace tragedy. Todd's younger brother Sean, an auto mechanic, was working under a limousine which was supported only by a jack. The jack failed and the car came down on Sean, crushing and killing him instantly. He was just 26.

While Threads of Life did not exist at the time of Sean's death in 2000, Todd was first introduced to the organization a few years later by his father, who was a volunteer during Threads of Life's early days.

It would be several more years before Todd felt ready to start volunteering for Threads of Life, when he trained to become a member of the Speakers Bureau. "It seems strange since my brother's accident was 18 years ago" he says, "but with a busy schedule, and due to the fact that I had a lot of anger after the tragedy that I felt wouldn't have been very helpful, I came into Threads of Life only recently in January 2016." Shortly after completing Speakers Bureau training, Todd shared his story in the Summer 2016 edition of the newsletter.

Todd recalls that his favourite memory about his work as a volunteer with Threads of Life was following a speech he gave to a large audience from the Ontario Ministry of Labour. "The Deputy Minister came up to me afterwards to thank me but to also let me know that my story and others were being heard and he would do everything in his power to make some real change. This is obviously the goal for all of us at Threads of Life and hearing that message from a high level within the government helps me to keep going to ensure the message continues to be heard and change is adopted." In addition to volunteering on the Speakers Bureau, Todd was instrumental in securing financial support for Threads of Life from his employer, Terrapure Environmental, which is now a national Steps for Life sponsor.

Todd's ultimate reason for volunteering is to help others and at the same time, inspire change. "I had chosen to volunteer for Threads of Life because I have had a very personal experience with my brother's tragedy where I can use that experience to help others to be mindful and understand the need to do better in preventing these tragedies in the future."

By sharing his story, Todd is making a lasting impression and contributing to Threads of Life's vision of inspiring a culture shift. "I have told my story many times both within Threads of Life and outside to many people and I have had the occasion to meet people years later who tell me they still remember the story I had told. This is what I believe will help to create change, as society must change the mindset of how we all look at safety in the workplace."



Todd Smith

## Saying thank you to Kate



Threads of Life was sad to say farewell to Family Support Manager Kate Kennington this summer. Over her 10 years with Threads of Life, Kate worked in several roles, including organizing

Steps for Life walks and other events, coordinating volunteers, and serving as the key contact with Threads of Life families. Kate is loved by staff and families alike and we all wish her well in her next adventures.

# Opening the door for more participation

As we mark 15 years of work, Threads of Life has seen steady growth in our outreach and the number of families we are able to serve. That expansion is thanks to partners who open the door so that more families can participate, more volunteers can be involved, and more people can hear our messages.

The Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB Saskatchewan) has played a crucial role in growing Threads of Life participation in the province. In the past five years alone, the number of Saskatchewan family members has increased by more than four times, two new Steps for Life walks have started up, and a number of volunteers have been trained to be speakers or Volunteer Family Guides.

WCB Saskatchewan has committed to multi-year agreements, devoting funding to family forums, volunteer training, the speakers bureau and other forms of support for those affected by work-related tragedies.

But the WCB is one of many Threads of Life partners whose involvement encompasses much more than funding. WCB employees help to organize Steps for Life walks in Regina and Saskatoon, and facilitate sessions at family forums. The board also brings in a Threads of Life representative from time to time, to speak to front-line staff so they can share information with their clients.

“For WCB Saskatchewan, this is a partnership that just makes sense,” says Grant Van Eaton, Director of Extended Services. “Helping people find Threads of Life is one more way we can support our Saskatchewan families. And being part of Threads of Life’s prevention initiatives lines up with our commitment to Mission Zero.”

While we all look ahead to that day when workplace tragedies are eliminated and Threads of Life is no longer needed, we’re thankful for partners who ensure our services are available to those who need them now.



WCB Saskatchewan's Grant Van Eaton, right, at the family forum with Threads of Life's Kelley Thompson



## How you help

Our partners work side-by-side with Threads of Life to achieve our mission of helping families heal and preventing future life-altering workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths. Here's how:

**Growing awareness:** Partners help to spread the word so everyone who could benefit from Threads of Life's programs will be aware of what we have to offer.

**Growing our volunteer base:** Partners organize events or support their employees' volunteer efforts.

**Growing our participation:** Partners help Threads of Life to get more people involved.

**Growing our revenue:** Partners sponsor events or programs, hold fundraisers, make donations and name Threads of Life as their Charity of Choice.

## A thousand stories... and more

**Everyone who participates** in Steps for Life-Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy has their own story. Whether you're a walker, a volunteer, a donor or sponsor, there's some personal motivation that drove you to get involved.

Every year in Canada, close to 1000 workers are killed on the job, or die as a result of a work-related injury or illness. Every one of those families has a story about their loved one. Add to that the thousands who are injured on the job each year, whose stories have just taken a sudden plot twist. Steps for Life offers a chance to tell those stories and reveal the faces and lives behind the statistics. We're hoping many of you will share your story – your reasons for being part of Steps for Life.

### A thousand reasons to volunteer. Here's one: **Amanda Foran's story**



I started my career as a safety professional in 2009 after working in the field as a labourer, equipment operator and in quality control. As soon as I entered the field I quickly realized how important “safety” as a whole is to the overall work process but more importantly, in all aspects of life...

Striving to find meaningful ways to positively impact the lives of the workers I aim to protect and truly care about – I often relate to those stories of others whom have been injured on the job, and being the softie that I am, I can't help but think how much those situations could affect a person, a family, their friends, a person's whole world. Anyone who has ever lost someone in their life would have to agree that the ripple effects are deep and often unattended to, let alone the idea of losing someone while they were simply making a means for their lives, to provide for their family... It is NEVER going to be ok.

I came across Steps for Life when a close friend of mine (who is also involved with the planning committee) asked me to come down and check out this event she was a part of, and in an instant – it finally all came together for me. Not only was there a organization that truly aims to solve workplace injuries, that is pro-active in its approach and its messages, but is also a support-based home for those who are left behind after something tragic happens.

This volunteer experience has only just begun for me, and the stories have been incredibly impactful for me as a professional and a person – but in this great big world of scary things, I feel that Threads of Life is one of those ‘lighthouses’ that helps keep people from the darkness. I hope to help Steps for Life to keep shedding light for others who need it and to continue to do the most I can to prevent anyone having to experience a loss.

*Amanda is a volunteer with Steps for Life Calgary. You can be involved as a Steps for Life volunteer too!*

*To learn more, visit [stepsforlife.ca](http://stepsforlife.ca) or take the first step by contacting the regional development coordinator in your area:*

- Heather Lyle, National Steps for Life Manager + interim contact for Atlantic Canada & Quebec - [hlyle@threadsoflife.ca](mailto:hlyle@threadsoflife.ca)
- Lorna Catrambone; Central Canada - [lcatrambone@threadsoflife.ca](mailto:lcatrambone@threadsoflife.ca)
- Lynn Danbrook; Western Canada - [ldanbrook@threadsoflife.ca](mailto:ldanbrook@threadsoflife.ca)  
Or call 1-888-567-9490.

**Mark your calendar for Steps For Life Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy 2019!**



## All about Steps for Life 2018:

- 27 communities hosted Steps for Life walks across Canada
- 5000+ people walked, including 383 teams

**COMING  
in the spring to a  
community near you!**

## Coming Events

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

**Central Family Forum** – September 28-30, 2018 – Nottawasaga Inn, Alliston ON

**Prairie & Western Family Forum** – October 26-28, 2018 – Saskatoon, SK Saskatoon Inn & Conference Centre

### 2018-19 Training

Volunteer Family Guide training  
January 24-29, 2019

Speakers Bureau training –  
February 28-March 3, 2019

## SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER!

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



The Standards Program Trustmark is a mark of Imagine Canada used under licence by Threads of Life.

## How to reach us

Toll-free: 1-888-567-9490

Fax: 1-519-685-1104

Association for Workplace Tragedy  
Family Support – Threads of Life

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*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.



## 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](http://www.threadsoflife.ca/donate)
- Please send me updates about Threads of Life events via email at: \_\_\_\_\_

Visa  MasterCard

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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](http://www.threadsoflife.ca)

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