



# Threads of life

A Canadian charity offers healing for families after a work-related tragedy.

George Mercer had experience with every type of truck imaginable: flat beds, rack and tarp, straight trucks, reefer vans, road graders, salt trucks, front-end loaders, containers, and plough trucks. He was always working, his daughter Jennifer says, but he still made time to coach his kids' sports teams, take them to Blue Jays games, and eventually, to spend every weekend with his grandkids.

George was proud of his long trucking career driving all over Canada and the U.S. "He was known for his friendly grin and treated everyone he met as his friend," Jennifer says, "and he had just successfully earned his Long Combination Vehicle certificate."

On a rainy November night, George was attaching a second trailer to the first when the whole unit began to roll. While trying to reach the manual brake, George fell, was pinned by the front wheels of the rear trailer, and was dragged several feet. He died in the emergency room later that night, alone with the hospital staff. It was too late by the time family was notified.

For Jennifer and her family, "it was such a sudden shock, and hard to believe how my dad worked his entire career and this one incident caused his death so quickly." In the months after the funeral, Jennifer struggled to cope: "It was hard to sleep and every day the grief was like the crushing pressure my dad had felt."



*George Mercer and his daughter, Jennifer*

A health and safety inspector told her about Threads of Life—the Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support. For families like Jennifer’s, living in the aftermath of a work-related fatality, life-altering injury, or an occupational disease, Threads of Life provides information, connection, and support. Jennifer was connected to another woman whose father had been killed on the job, and who was a trained volunteer listener. She attended a family forum: a safe place for her to release some of the pressure of her grief.

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### How companies and organizations help

Threads of Life counts on the leadership of companies and organizations committed to health and safety and Canadian families. They assist by:

- Spreading the word to people who need support
- Increasing participation in Threads of Life programs and events
- Facilitating volunteerism
- Growing Threads of Life’s funding

Her father’s death changed Jennifer’s life forever. But through Threads of Life she has found healing and hope. Jennifer joined the Threads of Life speaker’s bureau and helps to organize her local Steps for Life-Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy event.

“Threads of Life is truly a soft landing place to release the pressure of this grief and spread awareness and education to prevent this from happening to others,” she says.



### Get involved



*Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support*

You can help families like Jennifer’s. Learn more about how to get involved by contacting Threads of Life at **1-888-567-9490**.

You can also visit the Threads of Life website at [threadsoflife.ca](http://threadsoflife.ca).

Listen to **Episode 32** of the **IHSA Safety Podcast** for more about Threads of Life. [ihsasafetypodcast.ca](http://ihsasafetypodcast.ca)

# Workplace mental health: a team effort

Promoting psychological health and wellness at the workplace can make your business safer and more productive. It’s also just **the right thing to do**.

Whether you’re an employer, supervisor, or worker, IHSA has resources to help support workplace mental health—and improve your own well-being.

**At the new [ihsa.ca/workplacementalhealth](http://ihsa.ca/workplacementalhealth), you’ll learn how to:**

- Identify psychosocial hazards on the job
- Build mental health into your health and safety management system
- Become a workplace mental health leader
- Assess your own mental health
- Help coworkers in need
- And much more!