

Steps for Life Article - General

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Title: Steps for Life: Making change one step at a time

For Estella Hickey, Steps for Life is personal. Estella's son Kyle was killed in an explosion at work eight years ago. Estella has become an advocate for workplace safety, and participating in her local Steps for Life walk is just one of the things she does to spread her message.

"Friends and family join us every year for the Steps for Life walk in memory of our beautiful boy," Estella says. "It is a journey I wish I didn't have to make but one that will open other people's eyes to the dangers that can occur in an unsafe workplace. Everyone should return home from a hard day of work and not fall victim to a preventable workplace accident."

Steps for Life – Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy is a five-km walk to support families like Estella's affected by workplace tragedy. Created in 2005, Steps for Life is the flagship fundraiser for the Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support (known as Threads of Life). In 2016, 5,000 participants raised more than \$600,000 in communities across Canada. This spring, 30 communities from coast to coast will play host to Steps for Life.

The annual event raises money to provide peer support programs and services for families, and raises awareness about the importance of workplace health and safety. Steps for Life is also an opportunity for companies and communities to show their commitment to health and safety. Companies sponsor local walks, allow their employees to volunteer, and enter teams.

Estella has been a spokesperson for her local walk in Nova Scotia. She also helps to organize Steps for Life each year, and along with family members and friends, she raises money through bake sales and crafts. Estella is also a member of the Threads of Life speakers bureau.

Ultimately, Steps for Life – Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy aims to educate the community about the devastating ripple effects of each workplace tragedy and how we can work together to prevent others being injured or killed on the job.

"Being part of Steps of Life allows me to put a face to workplace tragedy, to let survivors know that they do not walk alone in their struggle with grief caused by workplace injury or fatality, and to honour my son Kyle's memory," Estella says. "Workplace health and safety is everyone's responsibility. We all find ourselves in situations that at times seem hopeless and we all have the choice to do something or take action. In order to eliminate the senseless and preventable loss of life or injury in the workplace, health and safety must always be in the forefront. We walk to make change one step at a time."

For more information and to register for the 2017 walk, visit www.stepsforlife.ca.

Steps for Life 2017 is sponsored by Acklands-Grainger, CannAmm, Dufferin Construction, PCL Construction, Stantec, Terrapure Environmental and Vale, as well as many companies and organizations at a local level.