

Press Release**Global leader in suicide prevention and intervention training, LivingWorks Education, celebrates 40th Anniversary with celebration in Calgary**

25 October 2023 - Calgary, AB ... From humble Calgary roots to a worldwide leader in suicide prevention and intervention skills training, LivingWorks celebrates 40 years of making communities around the world safer from suicide. Suicide prevention leaders from across Canada, Europe, Asia Pacific, the United Kingdom, USA and Australia arrive in Calgary this week to celebrate, and to share leading research and knowledge.

The LivingWorks 40th Anniversary Celebration and Conference begins on Thursday, 26 October at LivingWorks HQ, centered at WinSport. Beginning in 1983 as a start-up at the University of Calgary, LivingWorks has become a global success story, educating more than 2 million people in over 40 countries with such programs as LivingWorks ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) and LivingWorks safeTALK (Suicide Alertness for Everyone), helping people learn how to keep others safe from suicide.

“Governments around the world are realizing that we need a whole-of-community approach to suicide prevention, and that means we need everyone to play a role in keeping people safe. To fulfil this role people need to be able to learn the skills that LivingWorks training provides,” said LivingWorks CEO, Lance Armstrong.

LivingWorks Indigenous Australian Training Manager, Tegan Scheffe, is responsible for training community members in outback Australia from Aboriginal communities. “We have more than 700 registered LivingWorks trainers across Australia, so it is exciting to be in Calgary to meet with leaders from across the world. Calgary really is the centre of a global movement that has saved countless lives,” said Scheffe.

LivingWorks founder and Alberta local, Richard Ramsay, will also be on hand throughout the celebration and conference. Ramsey was awarded the American Association of Suicidology’s highest award, the President’s Award, in April 2023 for his outstanding contribution to the field of suicide prevention through LivingWorks.

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LivingWorks Backgrounder - Brief history

1983: RTTL partnership formed in Calgary, named after the LivingWorks Founders: Richard Ramsey, Bryan Tanney, Roger Tierney, Bill Lang

1987 – 1st T4T (Training for Trainers) with the California Department of Mental Health, Fort Mason Embarkation Centre, San Francisco

1991 – RTTL is formally recognized as a UCalgary start-up and becomes LivingWorks Education Inc.

1993 – 1st Meeting in 1993 with United Nations representatives from 12 countries, co-chaired by Richard Ramsey and Bryan Tanney, resulting in the UN guidelines for developing national suicide prevention strategies

1996 – LivingWorks Education held first field trials in Australia with the four LivingWorks co-founders

2001 – LivingWorks becomes the primary suicide intervention training for the United States Army

2005 – LivingWorks safeTALK half-day, in person training launched; developed in partnership with the Toronto Transit Commission at the request of the Australian Defense Force

2009 – LivingWorks ASIST is named as one of Canada’s gifts to the UNESCO Culture of Peace decade

2010 – LivingWorks wins the Calgary Awards Community Achievement Award for Commerce

2015 – LivingWorks welcomes Lance Armstrong and Associates as the new owner of LivingWorks. This transition was the culmination of many years of careful succession planning to ensure LivingWorks continued building hope and keeping people safe from suicide

2019 – LivingWorks Start is launched, the first online, entry level suicide prevention skills training

2023 – Today, there are over 2 million people trained in over 40 countries

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Key bios

Lance Armstrong, LivingWorks CEO (Calgary, AB). As LivingWorks USA began to grow in the early 2000s, Armstrong worked with the company to facilitate the integration of its Canadian and US operations. This ongoing relationship and affinity for LivingWorks' values and mission led to him deciding to join LivingWorks as a Board member, owner, and succession partner in 2015.

Richard Ramsey, Founder LivingWorks (retired) (Calgary, AB). Honored with numerous awards for his contributions to social work and suicide prevention locally and globally, Ramsey retired as a professor in 2004 but remains an active leader at LivingWorks. He served as President from LivingWorks' inception through to 2017, when he transitioned to the role of President Emeritus to focus on mentorship and guidance for staff, leaders, and trainers.

Shayne Connell, EVP Development, LivingWorks (New South Wales, Australia). As Executive Vice President of International Development, Connell's focus includes growing LivingWorks training presence globally by developing new relationships, strengthening LivingWorks' quality assurance program, and increasing the organization's profile on the international stage.

Dr. Peter Gutierrez, EVP Innovation, LivingWorks (Colorado, USA). Gutierrez has been a suicide prevention researcher for over 25 years and has directed or co-directed multiple large federally funded research projects including the Military Suicide Research Consortium funded by the U.S. Department of Defense. Gutierrez is also a past-president and former Board member of the American Association of Suicidology, a Fellow of the International Academy of Suicide Research, an associate editor of the journal *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior* and is a licensed psychologist in the state of Colorado.

Tim Houle, EVP Business Infrastructure, LivingWorks (Calgary, AB). Houle oversees LivingWorks' operations, policies, and technology implementation. Houle has extensive entrepreneurial experience, having founded and managed two corporations in the construction and home furnishing industries. He continues to play an executive role at Solaris Canada, one of the companies he founded, and his entrepreneurial perspective contributes to LivingWorks' effective financial stewardship and long-term growth in our mission to save lives from suicide.

Sharon Sutton, EVP Training and Delivery, LivingWorks (Texas, USA). Sutton has extensive experience in counseling and clinical psychology, and is both a LivingWorks ASIST and LivingWorks safeTalk trainer. As Executive Vice President of Training and Delivery she oversees strategic planning, implementation, and delivery of LivingWorks programs and contracts. A Veteran of the United States Army, Sutton served as an officer, a professor at West Point, a social entrepreneur, and has worked around the United States.

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