

## National Youth Safety Essay Scholarship Contest Winner

**Sarah Kunes**

*Central Mountain High School*

The OSHA 10-hour program has helped me recognize hazards everywhere I go. Most people assume that it is common sense, as did I, but the program changed my perspective. I am around construction sites daily. I am also related to a ton of people that have to follow OSHA's guidelines. I want to work in the health field after high school; some of the subjects we learned during OSHA was the proper PPE, and correct body mechanics, those will play a huge role for me.

One of my relatives is a contractor; I can now recognize when there is a hazard or something is wrong. For example, he is building a house, and the other day I noticed that the men were not properly following the walkway hazard. There were cords, tools, boxes and stuff everywhere. I recognized this as a hazard because someone could have easily fallen and injured themselves. I cleaned it up, and reported it immediately because that is what I learned from the 10-hour online program.

My mom is a pre-school teacher; I noticed the other day while visiting her at work, that there was a hazard. There was a kid's coat hung on the fire extinguisher. This is a hazard because if there was a fire, someone either couldn't have found the extinguisher or it may have taken too long to get the coat off and the fire put out. I mentioned it to my mom, who then gave the kids a lesson on why it is important that the coat was removed and the possibilities that can occur.

My sister is a nurse; she is trained to dispense medicine to the elderly that she works with. Some people that she works with are not trained to do so. I asked her if they have a double-lock rule there so unauthorized personnel can't get into the medicine. She told me that every medicine cabinet at her workplace must. OSHA workers come into health facilities very often because it is important to take care of yourself and others. I told her to make sure no one sees the code or gets ahold of the keys.

After high school, I want to be a physician's assistant. OSHA allowed me to think of real life situations. OSHA explained the proper body mechanics that a worker should use. Knowing this now, I realize that it will be extremely helpful to me as I will be on my feet constantly and moving patients. I know now that if I don't bend with my hips and legs properly, I will put too much strain on my back and possibly be in the hospital myself at some point. Another thing they talked about that will come into the health field is using the proper personal protective equipment. Having the correct PPE for the job could mean life or death. I can come into contact with different types of diseases that can be contagious. OSHA stressed how important it is to protect yourself from any possible contamination, along with protecting others. Since taking this course, I constantly think: "Am I bending properly?", "Is this putting too much strain on my back?" I have a lot less pain now, imagine if I didn't know the risk, I could have back problems a lot earlier than I should!

Emergencies may seem unlikely to happen. But it is a good idea to be prepared at all times for one. OSHA told me about natural disasters, fires, gas leaks and chemical spills. I would have never known what to do without the help of OSHA. They taught me that every facility needs to have multiple escape plans, directions on who to tell, and a list of priorities of who and what to get in case of one of those emergencies. OSHA has made me realize that accidents and emergencies DO happen and CAN happen unexpectedly everywhere.

The OSHA program has impacted me more than I thought it would. I thought it would be boring and that I wouldn't remember anything from it, but no. I remember so much of what I learned. The small quizzes and videos helped me recognize the hazards so much better. Harmful decisions are made all the time without knowledge. It's nice to know that I won't be the one making them, now with the knowledge I have from OSHA. From now on, I need to make sure that not only myself is safe and acknowledged but others as well.