

## National Youth Safety Essay Scholarship Contest Winner

### Corey Everett

*Shawsheen Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School*

Living in the household with my nonagenarian grandfather, it is important that there are as few hazards to his health as possible. Taking the OSHA 10 – Hour General Industry Safety Course has taught me that many of the actions I would have otherwise taken for granted were, in reality, creating a safety violation. Even a small puddle of water left unchecked on the floor could spell potential disaster for those who slip and fall on it. Even though the likelihood of any individual accident is infinitesimal, they accumulate to create a strong possibility of eventual disaster if left unchecked. These potential disasters are completely avoidable – and therefore unacceptable. In looking for a job, many employers will need to choose amongst many potential candidates to find the best one. Should it come to an impasse between two potential employees, having extra certifications at a young age is a very attractive quality to prospective employers. An OSHA credential is generally indicative of a safety-conscious mind, and hiring someone with one as such is indicative of a safe worker who will do their job effectively and with great attention to detail.

In the IT industry, many of the standards taught throughout the course with construction work in mind do not apply. However, the StartSafe, StaySafe philosophy remains the same on a universal level. It has taught me to be mindful of my surroundings at all times for objects which may cause harm if I am not aware of them. In an Internet office, one potential hazard in abundance are loose wires and cables. Poor wire management makes for a poor aesthetic which diminishes any appearance of professionalism, awkward maneuvering, and getting cables caught under swiveling office chairs and – most importantly – cables present a major tripping hazard if left unsecured. Before having taken this course, I would have never thought twice about the cables which lay strewn across the room. But after passing the course, I have taken the initiative to placate this issue. Cables are now neat and organized both in shop and at home. Any cables which obstruct movement are either duct-taped to the floor or else zip-tied together where applicable, resulting in a cleaner, more aesthetically pleasing room with little risk.

Ergonomics are also a valuable, under taught skill addressed in the course. Poor ergonomics will lead to a vicious cycle of back pain or even a deformed bone structure. This lowers your quality of life and reduces confidence. I always knew that I needed a better posture, but this course not only told me the often overlooked ailments which stem from bad posture – it told me exactly how I had to go about correcting them. Because of what I learned in the course, I no longer suffer from chronic back pain and no longer wake up with a numbness in my arms. In my bedroom and office, I have switched out a dining chair (designed to only support your back for an hour or two) with an ergonomically-viable leather office chair and have also made sure to sit with my legs uncrossed and arms on the desk. This has made me feel much more comfortable which, in turn, has improved my mood and my general motivation to get things done in a timely and efficient manner.

This is how I've incorporated the OSHA 10 – Hour General Industry Safety Course into my daily activities. I have used the knowledge from the course in order to lead a safer, more productive work and home life with greater peace of mind. Before the advent of modern safety procedures, the only standard was to more or less throw human suffering at a project until it was completed. Thanks to OSHA, this is no longer the case. Many people using the accumulated knowledge from having taken the course were able to take precautions which made the difference between life and death – for that, we should follow their example.