

National Youth Safety Essay Scholarship Contest Winner

Wyatt Liewer

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My name is Wyatt Liewer and I am a senior at O'Neill High School. Next year I will be attending the University of Nebraska Lincoln and Major in Industrial Technology Education. I became aware of this course when looking up information for a project of Construction safety in my high school Industrial Arts class. I took it upon myself to include the advice of completing a 10-Hour OSHA safety card in that presentation and to this day there are multiple kids in this department of O'Neill High School completing the course. My 10 -Hour OSHA card not only impacts how I recognize hazards, but helps me teach others the importance of construction safety and helped benefit my future.

It was my freshman year when I noticed some extreme hazards of safety in our shop department. Kids were using power tools the wrong way and putting their bodies in harm's way. This is one of the main reasons I encouraged many of my peers to complete the 10-hour course. I brought it up to my instructor and he let us complete this during class time. Before I knew it my whole class was OSHA certified and it had even spewed into several other classes as other people were taking the course as well. At the completion of every course we would print out the ticket of completion and tape them on the "OSHA" wall of fame. The whole front wall of shop class is filled to the brim with CareerSafe Certification of Completion tickets with names of various students. This sparked something within the department. Now every year kids are completing the course and becoming a part of the wall of fame. This has been an eye opening experience for us all as the safety in our shop has increased dramatically. Now students are wrapping up all cords and keeping the work place clean, using power tools the correct way, and even wearing the proper safety attire for any task at hand. The impact the 10-Hour safety card has had on my school is something that has changed the way we work. I am very thankful for the opportunity our school gives kids now by paying for the course.

My experiences in the shop program have impacted my life in the right way and it has led me to pursue a career in this field. I will be attending college to become a trades and industries high school teacher. Something I would never have wanted to be if it wasn't for this safety course. I would not want to be the teacher in charge of kids not using things the right way and putting themselves in harm's way, but when I completed the course my thoughts change. I don't have to be that teacher in charge of a hazardous class, I can be the teacher leading kids in the proper way to show safety in the shop and their everyday lives. Safety comes first in every student's day and the completion of the OSHA-10 hour course assures this. I would make sure every of my students are OSHA certified.

When completing the 10-Hour OSHA safety course I learned that not using safe equipment or tools can be a major hazard. I thought: how this could affect my life? And I caught a huge hazard. Our shop has been using a very out dated and dangerous table saw for a number of years. The table saw had been known for bad kick back and it didn't always work. I thought this could be an opportunity to implant another element of safety into our shop, so I approached the school board with an idea. A table saw called the Saw Stop was the top of the market for table saws. The Saw Stop allowed for any cuts without a chance of being cut by the saw. It is the safest and most prestige saw on the market. I thought this would be a great addition to our woodshop. After some explaining and teaching about the tool the school board felt it was a no brainer and before I knew it we had one in our shop.

The 10-hour OSHA safety card has done nothing but positive change in my life. It completely changed how I look at all hazards when at school, work, and everyday life. I cannot wait to help share this tool of safety for future generations in our school system because my class started something great. Something that will never be forgot and something that will help the overall safety of the O'Neill High School shop program.