

## National Youth Safety Essay Scholarship Contest Winner

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“Think before you do!” my dad always harps at me. Some of the most horrendous tragedies have resulted in the fault of teens not thinking before they act. Sending one last quick snapchat before rolling your car over and colliding with a light post. Getting drunk with your friends at a house party and deciding to drive home. Unnecessary comments intended to make someone feel insecure and misplaced. Letting the wrong crowd influence you. As young adults, we are prone to quick actions with lifelong consequences. I believe that OSHA training teaches us what our moms or dads have tried to instill on our developing minds, think before we do. This philosophy applies both to one's personal and professional choices.

Before any project, safety should be a number one concern. Not how fast can I get this done, or what's the easiest way to do this? Day to day, there are certain safety precautions that can be easily overlooked. While some tasks may have very little risk, other tasks cannot be overlooked or tended to without caution. I have been able to immediately apply the information learned during my OSHA 10-hour general training course by applying it in the kitchen through my Independent Living class. In this class, we frequently use an open flame to cook and sharp knives to cut. I ensure that both myself and my peers are using caution with these instruments to avoid careless mistakes.

When my classmates and I learned all of the requirements and precautions of using our school's kitchen, it allowed us to be more productive and efficient. Our instructor was able to spend less time continuously informing us of hazards and spend more time teaching us the fine details of our cooking class. We learned what to pay attention to performing certain tasks while cooking so we could spend more time getting the job done and working together efficiently.

Beyond the kitchen, OSHA taught me a wide variety of precautions that assist in multiple tasks that come my way. Specifically, I'll be able to utilize my knowledge of hazards starting next year when I enter into the Colorado School of Mines and start studying to be a Civil Engineer, and these tools will stretch into my whole career. Whatever environment I work in will have to be safe for myself and the public. In any product design or maintenance, I must be able to reassure its safety and assess if it poses any possible danger to its users. During my job shadow with our local civil engineer, she demonstrated precautions that OSHA had taught me including wearing a safety vest and a hard hat at every construction site, and she did so like it was second nature. Even as a seasoned, skilled professional, she reminded me of the importance of my OSHA training.

The most important aspect I took from my training is to think before I do. I want to have a great quality of life and not be restricted by any injury caused by my own recklessness and to be able to prevent injury to others. One wrong move could be the defining decision that causes detrimental results. I'm thankful that my OSHA training will help me be aware of safety and hazards in my professional career, much as my father has instilled in me in my personal life.