

## National Youth Safety Essay Scholarship Contest Winner

**Jemil Johnson**

*Hogan Street Alternative*

Growing up in a 2-bedroom apartment with 9 other siblings was a chaotic way to live. Living under those circumstances it made me contemplate wanting to do something better for myself and family members. As I was growing up into a young adolescent, I was a troubled kid, who didn't care what would happen to him, and then OSHA was brought to my attention. Now mind, OSHA was introduced to a young, bullheaded, stubborn kid who didn't want to accept help from anyone. However, it found its way into my life to stay.

How OSHA came into my life was when I was 12 years old being in and out of facilities until a point of when I went in I didn't come home. At 14 years of age, I was sentenced to juvenile life, which means I am here under the Dual Jurisdiction Program until the age of 21. The Dual Jurisdiction Program is a program that consists of youth who were certified as adults which are placed in a juvenile facility, as well still being under (D.O.C) Department of Corrections.

OSHA has provided me with all of the essential needs when it comes to keeping me and the ones around me safe. Safety is a major need in today's society, and I am here to tell you how OSHA has helped me. Hazardous issues happen every day, every hour, every minute, nevertheless, how are you going to prevent it if a fire or anything in a hazardous nature happen? OSHA has taught me to use a class K fire extinguisher to put out a grease fire, without OSHA I would have used water or anything around that was liquid. Fires are important to learn about and what type of fires you are dealing with so you could help yourself or any one in need of help.

Construction is a big industry to get into, you must know how to use all tools that are power related, what proper PPE you need to deal with any power related tools and things to protect you from getting a limb severed. When I was 13, I was with my grandfather in his workshop that he called "The Sacred Peace Area" (The SPA) working on an extremely large doghouse for my dogs and their litter. Papa Charlie was cutting some wood to make a roof, when he was cutting the last piece of wood his pinkie finger was severed off and I instantly passed out. Later on in life, I finally realized that he was operating with an unguarded machinery. It made me realize that it is vital to check each piece of equipment before usage, make sure everything has its protector to protect the person who is using the machinery, and most important how to use each piece of equipment.

OSHA has been a great help to me by helping me choose what career path I want to achieve to better myself. It also has made me realize that no matter how important you were to achieve a goal make sure you have met all the safety requirements before you do anything. Now, as a 19-year-old young man who is well educated with the help OSHA who also taught me responsibility for the safety of myself and others I am able to achieve any goal that I want to complete in the work field.