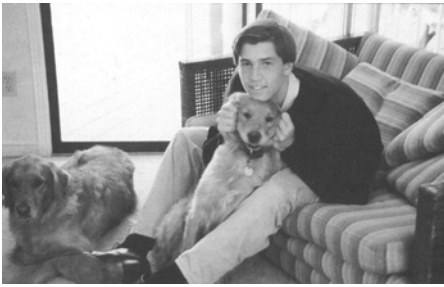


## A letter from one parent to another

Do you remember when you helped your children cross the street - held hands, looked both ways, waited for the right signal, stuck out your arms - took no chances?

Or what about your 16-year-old getting behind the wheel of a car - lots of training and practice first, learning the signs and the laws and becoming aware of the hazards?



So then why do so many of us not understand that young people face a whole *new* set of risks when they go to work? Do they know the signs, the laws, the rules and the most common hazards before they even go through the front door of a workplace? Often, it doesn't even register that our kids have to figure this out on their own at 14, 15, 16 or even 19 years of age, which was how old my son Sean was when he was killed on the job. What *are* we supposed to do? Is it too difficult to confront a teenager about these things? These questions came too late for our family. And that happens more than often than most of us know or would ever imagine.

Last year 60,000 Canadian kids under age 25 went on workers' compensation because they suffered injuries at work, injuries severe enough to cause them to miss work the day they happened and for *at least* one more day. In the last two years nearly 100 kids have died at work - in restaurants, convenience stores, retail outlets, gas stations, factories, outdoors - in almost every kind of place you can think of. Where are *your* children working today?

Sean's employer was found completely responsible for his death and paid a fine. But convictions, fines and even jail terms don't bring your children back to you. As my young friend Candace who lost a leg to a workplace injury says "The employer is supposed to get it right, but you're the one who pays the price if they don't."

There are hundreds of thousands of safe, responsible employers in Canada. But the studies - the facts - say more than 50% of employers don't provide workplace specific training. How can any of us know which employer is a safe employer, never mind our kids? And if they are not, then how can our kids recognize clues about what is missing?

Both Sean and Candace had no preparation to help understand the risks they faced at work. Not in school, at home, at work or anywhere else. And even if kids do get it through their schools, which in many jurisdictions in Canada they should but do not, then how do we know they actually understand what they have been taught? I learned the hard way about leaving all of that to chance. I didn't take chances at crosswalks, but didn't think about it for workplaces. So how can Passport to Safety help your kids, and help you?

Get everyone in your family under the age of 25 to join Passport to Safety. You can even sign them up yourself on the web site and present them with their web access card. *Ensure* they take the national health and safety test. They can print out the certificate they earn and show you they completed it. This all helps in two important ways. First, it tells you your child is aware of some health and safety basics that may help prevent needless workplace injuries; and second, it contributes to changing the culture among all of us parents, many of whom are employers, to one that does not accept that workplace injuries 'just happen'.

Please take your children to [www.passporttosafety.com](http://www.passporttosafety.com). Our dream is to live in a world in which our children come home safe and healthy at the end of each day.

Yours truly

Paul Kells

**Remember! Job specific training is always required.**