

**Remarks of
David Michaels
Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health
Protecting Young Workers from Workplace Violence
Monday June 23rd, 3 pm**

- Thank you so much for the work you are all doing.
- Through our Susan Harwood Training Grant Program, we're able to reach vulnerable workers with vital safety and health training by awarding grants to nonprofit organizations, community colleges and business associations.
- One key group of vulnerable workers are teens. When you're coming out of school and heading to your summer job, the last thing you expect is to get seriously hurt or killed at work. But every nine minutes, a U.S. teen gets injured on the job. And just last week, a 16-year old boy was killed by a crane at a construction site in Missouri. In 2012, more than 170,000 young workers were injured and 361 were killed. We want teens, their parents, and their employers to know that these injuries and deaths are preventable when workers receive the proper training and protections.
- That's why what MassCOSH is doing is so important. Through their grant, they've developed "**Teens Lead @ Work,**" a program that prepares peer trainers to teach other young workers about occupational safety and health. Peer-to-peer training of this sort has long been shown to be an effective tool for teaching and reaching vulnerable populations.
- The MassCOSH curriculum is special because it trains peer teen educators on health and safety hazards that young workers face on the job, like workplace violence.
- Under the OSH Act, employers must provide a workplace free of serious, recognized hazards, including workplace violence. After the stabbing death of 18-year old Cristian Giambrone [Jambrone] several years ago by a shoplifter, MassCOSH found that most

teens had not been trained on how to respond to shoplifter or other threats of workplace violence.

- MassCOSH has been a leader in this country ensuring that employers train teens about workplace violence – especially not to chase shoplifters. That employers establish workplace violence programs, provide adequate security, cameras and alarms, and never allow teens to work alone.
- This is a unique opportunity to reach out to young workers with life-saving information. Of course it's the employer's responsibility to provide a safe workplace. But educating young workers to identify hazardous situations can give them the confidence they need to speak up at work and ask for the training and protections they need to be safe.
- To learn more about our Harwood program and all the great work our grantees are doing, you can visit our homepage at www.osha.gov. We've also got a special page just for young workers, which we'll be featuring on our homepage throughout the summer job season. The page has many useful resources, including a wonderful set of workplace safety videos made by teens for teens, from a recent contest sponsored by the Oklahoma Labor Department.