



PRESS RELEASE

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Taunton, Lowell and Holbrook Teens Win State-wide Work Safety Poster Contest

Youth leaders, state agency officials announce award winners and other youth-led actions to stem work injuries

BOSTON—March 14, 2013—With state data showing Massachusetts teens average nearly 700 work-related emergency room visits each year, Boston teens and state officials working to change these statistics announced the winners of the statewide 3rd annual *Safe Jobs for Youth* poster contest today at the Massachusetts State House.

16 year-old Shari Coté of Taunton won first place, taking home a cash prize of \$500. “This poster contest gives teenagers a chance to contribute to the state and other teens by sharing an important message,” said Coté. “I hope teenagers will learn that they should feel safe everywhere, and if there are any problems or dangers where they work, they should speak up about them.”

Co-sponsored by MA Departments of Public Health, Education, Labor Standards, Industrial Accidents, the Office of the Attorney General, Commonwealth Corporation, U.S. Department of Labor and the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MassCOSH), the winning poster will soon be seen on MBTA transportation vehicles. 170 teens participated in the contest, and 60 youth served as judges.

Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Joanne F. Goldstein recognized the award winners at the event. “I want to congratulate Shari Coté and the other winners who have put their creativity and talent to use for the important goal of keeping young workers safe on the job,” said Secretary Goldstein. “We have strong laws in the Commonwealth to keep all workers safe on the job, and the Safe Jobs for Youth Poster Contest helps provide us with more opportunities to reach teens. Education and awareness are key to making sure younger workers, new to the workplace, know of their rights and stand up to insure their enforcement.”

According to Massachusetts Department of Public Health data from 2005 to 2009, the newest available, there were 3,400 emergency department visits for work-related injuries to teens under age 18. 17-year-olds suffered from the highest rate of workplace injuries for workers 15-17 years old, with males becoming injured at a higher rate than females.

“This contest is important because teens need to know about safety and health at the workplace and by having the winning poster on the T, the message will get to a lot of young workers,” said Justin DeMarco, MassCOSH peer leader, a co-sponsor of the event, who served as a judge and presented the awards.

Second place went to Chiara Lowell of Lowell and third place to Victoria Hamilton of Holbrook, who took home prizes of \$300 and \$100 respectively. Joe Hazelton, 15 of Arlington; Dustin Sampson, 18 of Worcester, Alisa Partlan, 18 of Waltham, Spencer Travis, 16, Adrienne Kelley, 16 and Tianah Holmes, 15 all of Taunton, Susane Rijos, 16 of Springfield and Alina Galindo, 16 of Somerville won honorable mention.

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The Massachusetts Youth Employment and Safety (YES) Team includes the Office of the Attorney General, Commonwealth Corporation, MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, MA Department of Industrial Accidents, MA Department of Public Health, MA Department of Labor Standards, U.S. Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division, and U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

MassCOSH is a non profit workplace safety advocacy organization, based in Dorchester.