

December 17, 2014

Brian Lewis  
Director, Strategy and Integration  
Ministry of Labour, Prevention Office  
8th Floor, 10 Dundas St. E.  
Toronto, ON M7A 0B2

Dear Brian Lewis,

I am writing on behalf of the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF), and its 160,000 teachers who are full-time, part-time and occasional teachers in all the publicly funded schools in the province: elementary, secondary, public, Catholic and francophone.

The Ontario Teachers' Federation has long been a partner with the Workers' Health and Safety Centre (WHSC) in the delivery of the Young Workers' Awareness Program (YWAP). We are pleased to write this letter in support of the WHSC application for funding to support this tremendously important and valuable program.

As teachers, our members are very concerned with the safety and well-being of young people. The students we teach enter the workforce as volunteers, through co-op, and through summer and after-school jobs. As young people, even after graduation, many young people work in a variety of settings, often for short periods of time before establishing longer term employment. During these points of early entry into the workforce, they are particularly vulnerable. That is why the Young Worker Awareness Program is so important.

The goal of the program is to provide basic awareness to students while they are still in school and before they are potentially exposed to risks or hazards in the workplace. The program gives them introductory information and a sense of their rights to be in a safe environment, whether it be a volunteer or co-op placement or paid employment. This is a critical entry point at which to reach them; schools provide the best opportunity.

Working with the WHSC, we help recruit appropriate and interested teachers to assist in the delivery of the program, also taking into account the volume of demand by region. Volunteers who come forward are provided training in content; as teachers, they are already expert at instruction, facilitating dialogue and engaging teenagers. We also promote awareness of the program in schools.

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To Brian Lewis, Director, Strategy and Integration  
Ministry of Labour, Prevention Office

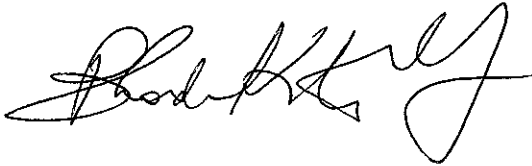
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Assessment and evaluation are essential to teaching and learning; as qualified teachers, they are able to assess the resources, student learning and reaction and make suggestions for positive changes. This cycle of feedback among the teachers who deliver the program, the WHSC and the students themselves, has made the program the success it is. Likewise, it has identified the need for the program to continue and for resources and materials to be revised to ensure currency and relevance.

We wholeheartedly support the Centre's proposal and look forward to the ongoing success of the YWAP and OTF's partnership with the WHSC. We trust that the program will continue to reach students throughout Ontario; these early lessons for young people are absolutely critical.

Sincerely,



Rhonda Kimberley-Young  
Secretary-Treasurer

RKY/pb