

HEADS UP!

The official newsletter of SMARTRISK.



The Mission

SMARTRISK helps people see the risks in their everyday lives and shows them how to take those risks in the smartest way possible so that they can enjoy life to the fullest.

SMARTRISK™



SAUVE-QUI-PENSE™
preventing injury with smart thinking

Table of Contents

In this issue...

SMARTRISK No Regrets	1
A profile	2
Risk radar	2
Dr. Conn's point of view	3
CHN news	3
Injury interpreter	4
Honouring donors	4

SMARTRISK Heroes begins fall tour

The **SMARTRISK Heroes 2007-2008 tour** is on the road, spending the early part of fall in Saskatchewan and Alberta, before heading to Ontario. A few Ontario dates – which may be eligible for bursary support – have opened up in November. For a list of show dates and locations, or to find out more about booking SMARTRISK Heroes, visit www.smartrisk.ca, e-mail smartriskheroes@smartrisk.ca or call 416-596-2703.

SMARTRISK NO REGRETS

Peer-to-peer youth injury prevention program heads into 67 high schools this fall

Now in its fourth year, SMARTRISK No Regrets continues to expand across Canada, bringing on new sponsors, adding more schools and developing exciting new resources. For the first time this year, SMARTRISK was fortunate to have the services of two No Regrets alumnae on staff as summer interns. University students Rebecca Lockwood and Alex Kelly were invaluable resources, helping us make our programs as youth-friendly as possible. Highlights of what's new follow:

- SMARTRISK No Regrets was initially piloted in five schools, beginning in 2003. All five pilot schools remain on board. This fall, a total of 67 high schools across Canada will host No Regrets, including five new schools in PEI (supported by the Island Network for Injury Prevention), 10 new schools in Nova Scotia (made possible by Nova Scotia Health Promotion & Protection), two new schools in Saskatchewan (with funds from SGI), two French-language schools in Ottawa (supported by Health Canada) and one new school in B.C. (thanks to North Peace Savings and Credit Union).
- Recognizing that youth are major users of online social networking sites, SMARTRISK developed a site of its own to help No Regrets youth exchange ideas, and to help SMARTRISK staff support our growing numbers of schools in a cost-effective way. SMARTRISK HQ is the result. Open just to No Regrets teams, it's a fully-featured social network, with personal profile pages, music playlists, picture albums, videos, forums, user-created groups and more. It's where No Regrets students will go to exchange tips and advice with each other and where they'll find important news and resources from

SMARTRISK staff.

- New promotional items for No Regrets teams to use in their schools to encourage participation in injury-prevention activities are now available. As part of our ongoing evaluations, SMARTRISK surveyed students in focus groups to find out which giveaways were most attractive to students, which ones might be dropped and which new ones we might introduce. In response, SMARTRISK has developed several attractive new giveaways for prizes, including branded mousepads, shoe bags, T-shirts and flashing lights. In addition, SMARTRISK now has an online store where students (and other interested people) can buy SMARTRISK-themed items, including fashion-forward clothing, fridge magnets and calendars. Visit www.cafepress.com/smartrisk for the perfect site to start your holiday shopping, while donating to a worthy cause!
- No Regrets students will be working to help make helmets safer this year, joining a campaign to ensure that ski and snowboard helmets must meet CSA standards, just as hockey helmets sold in Canada must. A new pre-packaged activity will allow No Regrets students to educate their peers about a bill before Parliament that would require such standards. A website is being created to allow visitors to send a fax to politicians in support of the campaign.

Evaluations last year show that No Regrets grew successfully to 47 schools, with participants running more than 300 injury prevention activities in their schools. We're heading into another successful year!

A PROFILE

Ian Crowe of Kenora, Ont., knows life doesn't always offer second chances. In his final year of high school, the 18-year-old was on top of the world. Athletic, good in school and with a talent for making his friends laugh, Ian's football team had just won its division. "We were kings of the school," Ian recalls. "I felt invincible, life was great."



But during Christmas break in 2000, this novice snowboarder tried a jump that he now realizes was well beyond his abilities and experience. Ian is one of our newest SMARTRISK Heroes injury survivor presenters.

He had borrowed a friend's snowboard that was for sale and had gone to the ski hill with another friend. He was trying out the board to see if he wanted to buy it and really take up the sport. Ian had only snowboarded a few times before – "I couldn't even make it down the hill without falling," he says. But that didn't stop him that day.

"We went down the hill a few times and figured that it was time

to go hit a few jumps. We found a nice big jump, hit it once, wiped out, no big deal. So I figured, why not jump a little harder, get some BIG air. I went down the hill and just as I was hitting the jump, I jumped as hard as I could. Not a good idea if you're not very good at snowboarding. I ended up doing a backflip and landed on my head, shattering a vertebra in my neck, rendering me motionless. Instantly, my life changed."

Just four days after Christmas, a doctor told Ian he would never walk again. "I was paralyzed from the chest down. I had surgery, where they fused my neck with a metal plate and I was sent off to rehab with a neck brace, where I would spend the next seven months. In the beginning, I couldn't even brush my teeth, comb my hair, get in or out of bed, feed myself, or even go to the bathroom on my own. I was totally dependent on other people to help me, even with the simplest tasks."

Ian happened to meet the SMARTRISK Heroes crew when they were in his hometown presenting. He was impressed with the show and has recently trained to become an injury survivor presenter himself.

Today, Ian is close to graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree. He plays competitive wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby and is in training to join the Canadian national rugby team.

He's looking forward to helping students realize it is possible to get hurt doing something like snowboarding. "I never thought about it when I was that age. I never thought I could get hurt. I want to put it in their minds that it can happen to them."

RISK RADAR

HOME RENOVATIONS: they're increasingly popular. Understand and manage the risks.

With the increased number of television shows about renovating your home, a proliferation of big box stores and availability of inexpensive power tools, comes an increase in do-it-yourself projects. Coupled with these changes is a significant increase in the number of injuries among do-it-yourselfers, including cuts, eye injuries, broken bones, and finger and toe amputations.

In many cases, it's the novice or beginner who gets injured, not the professional. While home improvement shows offer some great ideas and tips, it is important to remember they are hosted by professionals whose careers depend on the fact that they are familiar with the equipment and how to safely use it. The increased availability of inexpensive power tools means that tasks that used to take considerable time

and effort, like sawing wood or hammering a nail, can now be done in seconds. This hikes the risk for injury, as many tools used for home maintenance and renovation projects are potentially hazardous.

Fall is commonly when Canadians complete home renovation projects and prepare their homes for winter, often injuring themselves in the process. For example, every year, thousands of Canadians end up in emergency departments after falling off ladders, with November the most common month of injury. There are many instances when one needs to use a ladder, whether for cleaning eaves troughs, putting up holiday lights before it gets too cold, or painting. There are also countless ways of injuring yourself while doing work around the house. Powered tools like saws, nail guns, grinders are common causes of home improvement injury.

MANAGING THE RISKS

Here are simple ways to prevent injuries during a home maintenance or renovation project:

Look First

- Keep the work area free of clutter and debris, to reduce the potential for slips and trips.
- When using a power saw, is there a chance your hands or arms will get near the blades? What if the wood catches or pulls? If you're unsure, check the owner's manual, and look before sawing, drilling or nailing.
- When using a ladder, ensure it's on level ground, away from power lines and other hazards. Avoid overreaching – a common cause of ladder falls.
- Keep tools and equipment in good condition. Prior to each use, inspect tools for any damage or defect.

CHN BOOSTS EFFORTS IN COLLECTION QUALITY

The Canadian Health Network Team at SMARTRISK is working on several new initiatives in efforts to refine our Injury Prevention Collection, and to strengthen our Network and audience-building activities.

We have begun to apply a peer review model to the collection in an effort to further improve the quality of the health information resources offered to Canadians. Our collection on falls, motor vehicle crashes, drownings, brain injuries and children's injuries are currently prioritized for

review by experts in the areas.

Together with other lead organizations that make up the CHN, SMARTRISK will host an event on Oct. 30 for Network Contributors. With collaboration as an overarching theme, the day will showcase benefits derived from collaboration as well as provide tools and resources to support collaborative efforts.

Watch for a CHN-sponsored Internet café at the upcoming Canadian Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion

FUNDRAISING NEWS AND EVENTS: SAVE THE DATES

We invite you to save the dates for these upcoming SMARTRISK fundraising events.

On Thursday, Feb. 21, the annual Pete Crompton SMARTRISK Event takes place at Osler Bluff Ski Club in Collingwood, Ont. The event is

in memory of Mr. Crompton, an accomplished skier who died at 27 in a boating incident.

The annual SMARTRISK Curling Bonspiel is on Feb. 29 in Toronto. For event and registration information, stay tuned to www.smartrisk.ca.

- Always unplug the machine before taking it apart for cleaning or removing a blockage. Make sure all guards are in place before using the equipment.

Wear the Gear

- Wear gear appropriate for your task (e.g., safety glasses, safety boots or shoes, earplugs). Avoid using bulky gloves with hand tools. Always face the ladder when climbing and wear slip-resistant shoes.

Get Trained

- Ensure you have proper training and are aware of hazards and limitations. Select the right tool for the task and avoid using tools for jobs they are not intended for.
- Read all owner's manuals before beginning work, and follow instructions.

- Consider taking a home improvement course, which will show you how to properly use tools and likely give you home improvement tips and ideas.

Drive Sober

- Make sure you can concentrate on the task at hand. If you're drunk, hung over, distracted, tired or angry, wait and work on the project at another time.

Most importantly, do-it-yourselfers should think about the possible risks in their work before they begin, and manage them accordingly. Know your limits. Be realistic – if a project is outside of your abilities, hire a professional. For more information, visit [the Canadian Institute for Health Information at www.cihi.ca](http://www.cihi.ca) and [the Canadian Health Network at www.canadian-health-network.ca](http://www.canadian-health-network.ca).

An Opinion: Dr. Conn's Point of View



Sometimes tragedy has a way of bringing out the best in someone. It's hard to know in advance how we would respond to a tragedy in our own lives – would we crumple under the pressure and the seeming unfairness of it all? Or would it serve to strengthen us in the long run, calling up vast reserves of courage and determination we didn't even know we possessed? In my work, first as a surgeon and then as CEO of SMARTRISK, I have encountered many individuals who have suffered great tragedies due to injury – either because of an injury to themselves or to those close to them. I have witnessed first hand the terrible, permanent legacy a traumatic injury can leave in its wake.

It is my great fortune to have also experienced the positive side – the families who have come forward in efforts to prevent similar tragedies befalling other families – and the individuals who have suffered injury themselves and are determined to help others make better choices so they can avoid being hurt. At SMARTRISK, we work with a number of these individuals through our touring SMARTRISK Heroes program. This fall, we are introducing several new, young injury survivor presenters to this in-demand travelling high school road show. As one way of training and integrating them more fully into our program, we hosted a two-day injury survivor presenter gathering at our offices this past summer.

Despite that all the survivors have suffered tremendously due to injury – whether losing limbs or the ability to walk – and have had to spend many long months, even years, in rehabilitation, not one of them would describe themselves as a victim today. Each still views the world in a positive light, rather than through a lens of bitterness or regret. During the sessions in the summer, our more experienced survivors reflected on all they had learned during the intervening years after their injuries. All have gone on to lead fulfilling lives. Many are participating in sports at highly competitive levels, including at the Paralympics and on national teams. Some have married and had children. Several have pursued university degrees, up to the doctorate level. Some work in the business world, others in non-profits, one is a hospital chaplain; one is even running for public office.

All have interests and hobbies beyond touring with SMARTRISK Heroes. Yet, our survivors also talked during the conference about how the opportunity to speak with young Canadians about smart choices through SMARTRISK Heroes has been an important part of their own healing. They spoke of all they had learned since their injury, the people they have met and the experiences they have had that have made them smarter and more compassionate.

Our long-term survivors told our newest members how they find it difficult to answer students when asked whether they would choose to turn back time and have that decision that led to their injury back again. Several mused that one's character is shaped by an accumulation of life's experiences and that they have grown as people since they were hurt. But they also agreed that it would be wonderful to walk again and that they wouldn't wish a catastrophic, life-altering injury on anyone. Our survivors hope students will learn from their mistakes, rather than having to learn from a traumatic injury first hand. Indeed, that is the very purpose of SMARTRISK Heroes. How fortunate we are to have such an outstanding group of individuals to deliver this crucial message.

Robert Conn, President and CEO

Injury Interpreter



Don't just read about injury statistics.

Learn from them. Here's a roundup of recent and relevant injury news and research, from trends to statistics, fads to hard facts.

Road rage more common among youth

Adolescents may be more likely to be victims of road rage than adults, a new study of Ontario youths finds. It's the first such study of road rage victimization among adolescents.

Ontario students were asked how often they, or someone in the vehicle they were in, had been victims of different types of road rage in the previous year. More than half - 53.2% - said they had been shouted or cursed at, or had rude gestures directed at them in the past year, compared to 40.9% of adults in a similar study; 8.9% were threatened with injury or damage to their car (compared to 5.3% of adults) and 6.2% were victims in which someone in another car tried to hurt them or damage their car (compared to 3.9% of adults).

The data also suggested that as adolescents progress through the stages of graduated licensing, they

are more likely to experience road rage, especially the more severe forms. The researchers note they may be on the road more and may take greater risks or make more errors, as they drive without adult supervision.

Source: Smart, R. et al., "Road rage victimization among adolescents," *Journal of Adolescent Health* (Vol. 41, Issue 3, Sept. 2007).

Recalled kids' products circulate online

Children's products and toys recalled for safety reasons are circulating – and selling – online, a new study finds.

The researchers randomly selected 150 children's products recalled over a decade. Then they searched for these products over 30 days on online auction site eBay. In total, 190 auctions contained a recalled item, with 70% of them eventually selling – mostly through American sellers, though a few sellers lived in Canada, Australia, Great Britain and Ireland.

The authors recommend a "multi-front initiative to decrease the presence of hazards in online auctions," including increased manufacturer efforts to improve recall return rates, requiring online auction sites to require sellers to verify non-recall status before item posting, and parental checks of government recall websites before item purchase.

Source: Brown Kirschman, K. et al., "Resale of recalled children's products online: an examination of the world's largest garage sale," *Injury Prevention* (Vol. 13, Issue 4, 2007).

Parents important models for teenagers

A new study out of California adds to the evidence that parents may have more influence over their teens than they might think.

A telephone poll surveyed the behaviour and views of 1,534 youth, 15-20 years of age, around driving or riding with someone under the influence of alcohol. Parents, in particular, peers and law enforcement all influenced youth beliefs and behaviours about driving and alcohol. "Parents, in particular, by way of bonding, monitoring, expression of disapproval, and positive role modelling, appear

to be an important social control mechanism for these risky behaviours," the researchers conclude.

Drinking alcohol in unstructured settings and hanging out with friends who drink and drive, were strongly linked to higher rates of driving and riding under the influence.

Source: Chen, M-J et al., "Identifying social mechanisms for the prevention of adolescent drinking and driving," *Accident Analysis and Prevention* (Article in Press, 2007).

National conference program now available

The preliminary program is now available for the Canadian Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion Conference, to be held in Toronto's Westin Harbour Castle, Nov. 11-13.

Various satellite events and working meetings are scheduled for before and after the conference.

The 2007 theme is Evidence to Action: Injury, Violence, and Suicide Prevention. It will be presented by Safe Communities Canada, Safe Kids Canada, SMARTRISK and ThinkFirst Canada.

For more information, see www.injurypreventionconference.ca

HONOURING OUR SUPPORTERS

We gratefully recognize the contributions of our donors.

SMARTRISK Champion (\$5,000+)

Paul Curley & Debra O'Rourke, Stephen Griggs, Reza Satchu, Mike Stevens, Mark Wiseman.

SMARTRISK Hero (\$2,500-\$4,999)

Stan Griffin.

SMARTRISK Guardian (\$1,000-\$2,499)

James Boyle, Jim & Iris Gardiner, Paul & Marylou Little, David Smith.

SMARTRISK Supporter (\$25-\$999)

Denyse Boxell, Mary E. Brown, Robin & Marion Collins, Consiglio Di Nino, Wayne & Kathy Dickinson, Jean &

Leslie Edwards, Susan Allison Edwards, Peter Farmer, Geoff Gibbard, Ian Gray, Andy Heintzman, Mary P. Horwood, Catherine Hurlburt, Bud Johnson, John & Madilene Kane, Jeff Kane, Kathy MaGee, John McFadyen, Thomas & Pamela Scoon, Catherine Lynn Simpson, Robert Stevens.

DONATE TO SMARTRISK

Mail this form (with a cheque or credit card information) to the address at right; telephone us; or visit our website to donate online.

Name _____

Address _____

Credit Card # _____ Expiry _____

Signature _____ Donation Amount _____

Talk to Us

790 Bay St.
Suite 401,
Toronto, Ontario, M5G 1N8

Call us at:
(416) 977-7350

or fax us at:
(416) 596-2700

or e-mail us at:
info@smartrisk.ca

Visit our website at:
www.smartrisk.ca