

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 Heroes	1
A profile	2
Risk radar	2
Dr. Conn's point of view	3
Sponsor news	3
Injury interpreter	4
Honouring donors	4

SMARTRISK Heroes travels west in fall

The SMARTRISK Heroes 2006-2007 tour is coming to a close, having presented nearly 40 shows throughout southern Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick since January.

The tour heads into Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and B.C. in fall 2007. Call now to reserve one of the remaining fall dates. For a list of show dates and locations, or to find out more about booking SMARTRISK Heroes, visit www.smartrisk.ca or e-mail smartriskheroes@smartrisk.ca

SMARTRISK HEROES

Organizations invited to consider becoming national sponsors

SMARTRISK Heroes has been travelling across Canada – while making occasional forays overseas and to NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas – for more than 15 years now. From Victoria and Prince Rupert, B.C., in the west to Yellowknife, NWT, and Dawson, Yukon, in the north, to tricky-to-reach communities, such as the island of Moose Factory, Ont., and east as far as St. John's, Nfld., the SMARTRISK Heroes team logs thousands of kilometres on its truck each year. In fact, the team drove 30,000 kilometres over six months this year.

The show has changed and evolved over the years, to ensure it remains fresh and relevant to teenage audiences. But the over-riding vision and messages remain the same: that young people can recognize the risks they face in their everyday lives and learn to take smart risks so they can go on enjoying life and taking risk for years to come.

What's new this year?

- Our profile inside will introduce you to our newest injury survivor presenter, Martin Larocque. Hurt in a car crash, Martin is fluently bilingual in both of Canada's official languages so will be able to present easily to our French-speaking teens. Because many of our presenters lead busy lives (including Martin, who plays on Canada's national wheelchair rugby team), it is important that we have enough staff on our roster to fill the many show dates in Canada.
- As our peer education program SMARTRISK No Regrets expands into high schools across Canada, SMARTRISK Heroes has become closely linked with it. Bringing in this high-energy assembly to a No Regrets

school has been a key way to raise excitement and interest among the school's students, who are then primed for the injury-prevention messages the No Regrets teams are set to transmit.

- We continue to evaluate SMARTRISK Heroes. We invite school staff who have recently experienced the program to visit www.smartriskresearch.ca to fill in a short survey to let us know how we're doing.
- Teachers say students often continue to talk about the SMARTRISK Heroes show long after it has left and they would like to capitalize on that. In response, we've developed an information sheet for teachers, so they can continue the conversation and the learning in their classes afterwards. The sheet contains suggested activities and injury prevention information.

Some recent changes mean that SMARTRISK Heroes is now able to take on a limited number of new organizations to become national sponsors of this high-profile program, joining Royal & SunAlliance Canada, Bell Mobility and CN. A national sponsor receives recognition across Canada at every SMARTRISK Heroes show, as well as logo placement on the truck and trailer, which act as a travelling billboard across the country. Your contribution would assist us in reaching as many as 50,000 students throughout the school year in a high impact and meaningful way.

If you are interested in exploring this rare opportunity for a partnership with SMARTRISK Heroes, please contact Karen Bahula, Manager of Sponsor Relations at kbahula@smartrisk.ca or 416-596-2726.

A PROFILE

Meet our newest SMARTRISK injury survivor presenter, Martin Larocque. Fluent in French and English, Martin is a member of Canada's National Wheelchair Rugby Team.



The following is excerpted and adapted from the story Martin shares with student audiences during SMARTRISK Heroes tours. Born in Montreal, Martin grew up on a dairy farm in small-town Ontario, the youngest of six children. He attended a semester of agricultural college but traded in the books for a well-paying job in the mines of northern Ontario.

"When I was young, I was full of life and felt like I was unstoppable and invincible. I didn't realize the value of life – authority always took a back seat and I wanted to make my own decisions without consulting anyone. I searched for my identity in high salaries and 'going hard'. I always took risks, from riding a horse, working with farm equipment from an early age, racing motor bikes, playing hockey, downhill skiing and other risks we all take on a daily basis. My mentality was 'work hard, play hard and party hard,' hence the term 'going hard'.

"However, one November, I made a choice that would change my life forever. I was living life in the fast lane – many of the

mineworkers had fast cars and drove accordingly, either sober or drunk. It was common to drive after a few drinks and if someone felt they had too much to drink, we would often give the keys to the person we felt was the most sober."

Martin had driven into town with a co-worker that day. The two separated for several hours then met again at a pub where his friend had been playing pool (for drinks, Martin later discovered.) Martin climbed into his car for the ride back to the mining camp. His co-worker was speeding when he failed to make a corner and crashed the car, rolling it several times and landing it hundreds of metres from the roadside. Although Martin was wearing his seatbelt, the top of the car came down and snapped his neck, severing his spinal cord. Fortunately, a passerby stopped and was able to assist Martin until the ambulance arrived. He was transferred to Thunder Bay hospital with a collapsed lung, ruptured spleen, intestinal rupture and internal bleeding. Martin soon discovered he was now a quadriplegic. "It wasn't easy seeing my 215 pound 6'4 body drop to 140 pounds within weeks," he recalls.

When he transferred to Toronto's Lyndhurst Hospital to continue his rehabilitation, he met many injury survivors and realized he was not alone. "I would have to re-learn how to eat, dress, get in and out of bed, how to use a wheelchair." With support of friends and family, he moved into his own apartment. Shortly after, he registered for his first track and field event, eventually going on to represent Canada at the Barcelona Paralympic games. He returned to college, married and now plays for Canada's wheelchair rugby team. Martin says, "My greatest desire is to be a source of inspiration for others to go that extra mile, to be the best you can be and, most importantly, to encourage people to make the right choices in life."

PLAYGROUNDS: a popular childhood activity. Understand and manage the risks.

Playgrounds are a favourite place for young children and their families. In fact, a Safe Kids Canada survey found that children between the ages of 1 and 9 years spend an average of 14 hours each week in spring and summer on playgrounds with installed equipment. Additional research by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute concluded that 95% of children 1-4 years of age and 87% of children 5-12 years of age use playground equipment.

In Canada each year, an estimated 2,500 children under 15 years are seriously injured requiring hospitalization due to a playground fall and over 20,000 children are seen in an emergency department. Injuries can range from minor incidents, such as scrapes and bruises, to broken bones and head injuries. About two deaths per year result, generally due to

strangulation. Children have died when their drawstrings or other clothing got caught on playground equipment, such as at the top of the slide. Children have also died when they became entangled in ropes or skipping ropes.

While removing equipment could prevent most serious playground injuries, active outdoor play is an integral part of child development and health. Playgrounds offer opportunities for fun, healthy exercise and imaginative play. Injury risks can be lowered without removing the fun and excitement. Two examples include: using impact-absorbing surfaces under equipment and supervising kids.

REDUCE PLAYGROUND RISKS

Here are tips to help reduce the risks for injury:

- Be actively involved with children while they are on the
- playground. Teach children about playground risks and appropriate use of equipment.
- Know the children you are supervising – their abilities, how impulsive they are and how safe the environment is. This will help determine whether you need to hold, follow or watch. (See www.wehealthunit.org for a copy of their Hold, Follow Watch booklet.)
- Ensure equipment is suitable for your child's age. For example, children under 5 years should play on equipment under 1.5 metres high. If your child needs help to reach a piece of equipment, it is likely meant for older children. For home playgrounds, choose age-appropriate equipment, instead of expecting children to grow into the equipment.
- Regularly maintain and check for broken equipment, loose

SMARTRISK CONTINUES AS CHN INJURY AFFILIATE

SMARTRISK has been granted a year's extension of its contribution agreement with the Public Health Agency of Canada to continue our work as the Injury Prevention Affiliate (lead organization) of the Canadian Health Network. With the support of many partners in our injury prevention network, we will continue to identify, catalogue and feature an array of resources to help consumers and health intermediaries make informed choices to reduce the risk of injury.

We have formed a CHN Injury Prevention Advisory Team

to support our work in fine-tuning our collection-building, network-development and event-planning efforts. The expertise of the team members is aligned to the areas in our collection prioritized for review this year. Included are experts in falls, motor vehicle crashes, drowning, brain injuries and children's injuries. They will review these areas of the CHN Injury Prevention collection, identify any additional organizations to include in our network and identify conferences and events that would benefit from a CHN presence.

SPONSORSHIP AND FUNDRAISING NEWS

SMARTRISK is very grateful to Hydro One Inc. for its recent generous contribution towards several SMARTRISK programs and initiatives, including SMARTRISK Heroes, SMARTRISK No Regrets, the SMARTRISK Navigator and the SMARTRISK Learning

Series. For example, the Hydro One funding for SMARTRISK Heroes will provide bursaries to Ontario high schools that would not otherwise be able to experience the program. Thank you Hydro One for helping us to protect a generation at risk.

handrails, broken glass, garbage, sharp corners and rusted or protruding bolts. Equipment should be stable and firmly anchored in the ground.

- Look around playground area and check to see what is under and around play equipment. Make sure there is lots of space around equipment. Choose a playground with a deep, soft surface or rubber surface. Grass, packed dirt, asphalt and cement do not absorb the impact of a fall and are not good surfaces under playground equipment.
- Remove drawstrings and scarves from children's clothing, take off bike helmets and put aside skipping ropes before playing on the playground, as these items can become caught in playground equipment.
- Notify the playground owner/operator if you have concerns

about the equipment. The Canadian Standards Association has developed a voluntary standard for playgrounds. The most recent edition is CAN/CSA-Z614-03 Children's Playspaces and Equipment. The document provides technical details about layout, surfacing, design, materials, installation and maintenance. These standards apply to public playgrounds. Anyone planning to build or renovate a playground should consult this standard. The standard is complex and it may be helpful to consult a playground safety inspector or design consultant.

For more information, visit www.safekidscanada.ca, www.canadian-health-network.ca, Canadian Paediatric Society www.cps.ca, Canadian Parks and Recreation Program www.cpra.ca

An Opinion: Dr. Conn's Point of View



Collaboration can be challenging: waiting for others to have their say or complete their part, negotiating back and forth, coming to a consensus. It can be difficult but it can also be extremely rewarding and beneficial for all parties.

At SMARTRISK, several staff have commented recently about the amount of great work our partners in various communities have been doing to promote and develop various SMARTRISK programs.

Our youth programs are a perfect example of how a variety of groups have really run with the ball over the last year to help us host, promote and fund our programs. For example, SMARTRISK Heroes recently spent four weeks in the province of New Brunswick. It was a major logistical undertaking as we travelled into both English-speaking and French-speaking schools with several of our injury survivors and spoke to thousands of high-school students. We had lots of help and funding support from a variety of provincial and national groups. A public relations specialist in N.B. coordinated media and helped launch the tour at a well-attended press conference – and subsequently got a good deal of attention from the local newspapers, radio and television.

Similarly, we've got another highly enthusiastic group of sponsors pulling together our Thunder Bay, Ont., SMARTRISK Heroes shows this month. This group has even set up a website devoted to bringing in the SMARTRISK Heroes program, raising anticipation in their community. Now that's dedicated!

In another example, the expansion of our SMARTRISK No Regrets peer education program would be proceeding at a much slower pace, were it not for the contributions of our many dedicated partners across Canada. Various corporations and non-profit entities have worked hard both to fund the program and to help us reach out to appropriate schools to participate. Many of these groups remain involved with their local schools as the young people take on the responsibility of educating their peers about choosing smart risks.

The depth of knowledge these corporations, government departments, health units, community agencies, non-profits and dedicated individuals bring to SMARTRISK about their local communities is invaluable to us. They know the key issues in their areas, the key people to contact and can warn us away from potential pitfalls. Melding their expertise with our expertise makes for an unbeatable force.

I have deliberately avoided naming any names in this column because there simply isn't enough room to list and thank all our committed partners. Instead, I will say how indebted we are to these many groups and individuals for caring enough about the lives and welfare of the young people in their communities to work as hard as they do to promote the messages of smart risk.

We are honoured to partner with all of you in the critical work of protecting the lives of the next generation.

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.

Sport most common injury for world youth

At least four in 10 adolescents in 11 countries around the world are hurt seriously enough to need medical attention at least once yearly, a new study suggests.

Rates were highest in Israel and Ireland with about half the students having a medically-attended injury, and lowest in Poland with only one in four children having such an injury. Canada ranked fourth lowest, with 37.8% of students reporting an injury in the previous year needing medical treatment.

Boys experienced more injuries than girls in all 11 countries. Sport activity was the most common mechanism of injury (33.5%), followed by biking (13.3%), walking or running (13.1%), skating (7.9%) and riding in a car (3%). Fighting was responsible for 4% of all injuries.

The study authors point out that

an interesting variation in bicycle injuries among countries suggests injury prevention programs and legislation may have a positive effect. Countries such as Hungary have a low emphasis on helmet use and safety programs, compared with Sweden, Canada and the U.S. This study found high rates of bicycle-related injuries in Hungary (21.6%) and lower rates in Sweden, Canada and the U.S. (11.8%, 8% and 8%).

Source: Molcho, M. et al., "The epidemiology of non-fatal injuries among 11-, 13- and 15-year old youth in 11 countries: findings from the 1998 WHO-HBSC cross national survey," *International Journal of Injury Control and Safety Promotion* (Vol. 13, Issue 4, Dec. 2006).

ATV child injuries fall after law changes

A new Nova Scotia law preventing children under 14 from riding all-terrain vehicles appears to have had a big impact on injuries among those children. One year after Nova Scotia altered its law

governing off-highway vehicles, prohibiting children under 14 from riding the all-terrain vehicles except on closed courses, ATV-related emergency department visits to the IWK Health Centre in Halifax fell by about half, compared to the same period the year before. ATV-related injury visits remained constant for teenagers aged 14-15, who are still legally allowed to drive ATVs but are to be supervised while doing so.

See <http://www.childsafetylink.ca> for the media release.

Injured equestrians highly experienced

A new study of serious injuries among Alberta's adult horseback riders finds it was not lack of experience that led to most of these injuries. In fact, the average injured rider was a male, 47 years old, with an average 27 years of riding experience behind him.

The injured riders were typically recreational or working riders who owned horses and rode Western style. Six in 10 were hurt when they fell or were thrown from their horse, 16% were crushed by a falling horse, 8% were kicked and 4% were stepped on. Chest and head injuries were most common. The authors note most riders wore

protective gear but not helmets. The authors say they plan to focus on vest and helmet use in their future injury prevention work with seasoned riders.

Source: Ball, C.G. et al., "Equestrian injuries: incidence, injury patterns, and risk patterns for 10 years of major traumatic injuries" *American Journal of Surgery* (Vol. 193, Issue 5, May. 2007).

Register soon for early bird rate at CIPSPC

Register by Sept. 15 to receive the early bird rate for the Canadian Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion Conference, to be held in Toronto's Westin Harbour Castle, Nov. 11-13, 2007. Registration covers admission to all sessions, including the wine and cheese reception, plenary sessions, concurrent workshops, poster sessions, lunches and nutrition breaks.

Designed to build on the 2003 and 2005 national conferences, the 2007 conference 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+)
William Wallace.

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

SMARTRISK Guardian (\$1,000-\$2,499) Dr. Robert Brison,

William Butt, Eva Kuchar, Carol Lome, Moksha Yoga.

SMARTRISK Supporter (\$25-\$999)
Jeff Plotnikoff, Armstrong Partnership

LP, Karen Bahula, Rod Behan, Gregory Farano, Paul Genest, Judy Hurlburt,

Melony Jamieson, Peter Jugoan, Knee-bone Inc., Willy Konantz,

Rob Magwood, Sarah Marshall,

Kevin McCredie, Diane McChesney, Margaret & Edward Morrow, Michelle Pearlman, Brian Scholey, Taylor

Simms-Brown/Kidzpace, Stacey Levitt Athletic & Education Foundation,

Debbie Taylor, Matthew von Teichman/ Life Choices Natural Foods.

DONATE TO SMARTRISK

Mail or fax this form to the address at right, or visit our website to donate online.

Name _____

Address _____

Amount of Donation _____

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