



## Moving Forward: Youth and Adults Working Together in Phoenix House

By Andrew Strother, Phoenix House Lead Senior Counselor & WOSH Trainer

We are pleased as well that we have included residents into our efforts. We initiated the WOSH curriculum for restaurant safety with the residents and were able to train the entire population. We recently received the "Safe Jobs for Youth" curriculum and we hope to begin a peer education program for some of our leaders to become educators in a safety program. All educational materials were provided to us by the Labor Occupational Safety and Health Program (LOSH) offices at the University of California Los Angeles through their long-term supportive relationship with us. Our clients walk the facility and cabins daily and report their findings in the shift meeting, on facility-run forms, or in person when possible. They are taught to participate in safety awareness right with the staff. In some cases, their awareness is more acute due to the fact that they reside here in the facility. We also are excited about the vocational aspect this provides for the future of our residents. In short, LOSH and the WOSH Specialist training have provided a way to build a safer community and uncovered a project that benefits the entire community.



Reed Smith, Andrew Strother, & Antonet O'Toole - WOSH Specialists, Phoenix House Descanso

Phoenix House has a solid 40-year tradition of working with persons with drug, alcohol, and other behavioral and emotional difficulties. We have facilities for diverse populations in Southern California. San Diego contains a long-term residential academy in a rural town called Descanso 40 miles east of San Diego that houses residents from age 13 to 18. Care for this population is a great responsibility that we do not take lightly. The corporation has always put priority on the care, welfare, safety, and security of our clients and staff. This would explain why we value the WOSH program to help our community, both the staff and the youth, to raise awareness about potential workplace hazards so we can avoid problems before they happen.

Since 2004, Phoenix Houses of Southern California has had 50 staff trained as WOSH Specialists, with 5 staff going on to complete an advanced training-of-trainers course. Locally, we have embraced hazard mapping and enhanced and expanded our safety committee to include all levels of staff. We have enrolled additional staff in WOSH trainings held in this district and have made safety a part of our daily shift meeting. Our training program on policies and procedures is done in cycles annually and includes stress management, crisis prevention, evacuation, fire drills, CPR/first aid, and my personal favorite, living hazards (poisonous plants, rattle snakes, spiders, etc.). In addition, we have a high propensity for brush fires, so we require extensive training on local resources that monitor fire hazards to assure early warning systems. Weed abatement, tree removal, and structural checks are done on an ongoing basis, and we have committees that monitor different areas of concern.



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### DOES CREATING A HEALTHY AND SAFE WORKPLACE STOP AT TRAINING FOR WOSH SPECIALISTS?

Of course not, one of WOSHTEP's key goals is to develop great worker leaders who walk the talk! Our more than 600 Specialists in Southern California (with the support of their employers, unions, and community organizations) use Action Planning to develop and implement immediate prevention strategies that build in-roads to making health and safety improvements in the workplace. In this newsletter we profile current efforts of some of our Specialists and Trainers and welcome you to contact us and share your story!

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**November 7, 8, & 9, 2008 - FREE Spanish Open Enrollment Health and Safety Training** at the UCLA Downtown Labor Center. Call (310) 794-5971 or email jemlatin@ucla.edu to Enroll!

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## A Window into Health and Safety for Latino Immigrant Workers

By Leonel Yoque, UCLA-LOSH



For the past two years, UCLA-LOSH has participated in Ventanilla de Salud (VDS) or Window into Health, a program of the Mexican Consulate in Los Angeles, aimed at promoting educational opportunities for those who visit the consulate for transactions related to passports, consular identification cards, or other services. While the paperwork is being processed, the visitor has the opportunity to go to VDS, where many different city, county and state health programs provide information about health services and screenings (for blood pressure, glucose, HIV, etc.), as well as informal educational presentations.

As part of this program, LOSH staff facilitates short, 10 to 15-minute presentations once a month to raise awareness about basic issues related to worker health and safety. In these short sessions, LOSH assists and provides

information to Latino immigrant workers, educating them about work

hazards, effective ways to prevent injuries and illnesses, workers' rights and responsibilities, and employers' legal responsibility under Cal/OSHA to provide a safe and healthy workplace.

For now, LOSH presentations have focused on two main themes: workers' rights to a safe and healthy workplace and the prevention of heat-related illnesses. These sessions have been facilitated by our staff, including Jessica Marques, Nancy Morales and Leonel Yoque. Gloria Trujillo, a WOSH Specialist, has also participated.

Thanks to the feedback gathered through short, written evaluations filled out by participants after each presentation, we've learned that many workers did not know their basic rights regarding health and safety on the job. Participants have asked us to continue bringing these kinds of educational programs to the Hispanic community. Getting these comments motivates us here at LOSH to continue our goal of reaching more and more workers in order to counter disturbing statistics indicating that Latino immigrant workers experience a higher rate of illness, injury and even death in the workplace.

Last year, LOSH also collaborated with the Consulate by participating in

the Seventh Bi-national Health Week organized by the Mexican

Consulate. This year, we are preparing for the Eighth Bi-national Health Week in October 2008. This event includes health fairs, short presentations, such as those featured in the VDS program, personal consultations and interviews, educational materials, demonstrations, and talks. LOSH participates actively in all parts of the event, providing more information and education about programs to promote workers' health and safety.

LOSH thanks the Mexican Consulate for creating the space to conduct the VDS program, which is a ray of hope for the Latino immigrant community in Los Angeles. This space allows for a dialogue where we, the facilitators of the presentations, also learn about the community and discover new ways to promote education and action to improve the quality of life of our community members. As a Community Outreach Representative at UCLA-LOSH, I would like to invite WOSH Specialists and Trainers who would like to facilitate some of these presentations as part of the VDS program to join us in order to reach more Latino immigrant workers.

If you are interested or would like more information, please don't hesitate to contact me at (310) 983-3026 or via email at [lyoque@irle.ucla.edu](mailto:lyoque@irle.ucla.edu).

## Landmark Citation in the Hotel Industry!

By Eden Flynn, SoCalCOSH Coordinator and WOSH Trainer

Many housekeepers in the hotel industry experience pain as a result of the repetitive work involved in room cleaning and bed-making. Housekeepers clean an average of 16 rooms per day, pulling sheets off of beds, lifting 100-pound mattresses, changing heavy duvets, stuffing four or five pillowcases per bed, dusting and vacuuming rooms, stretching overhead to clean shower walls, and reaching down low to scrub toilets and tubs. As a result, many workers suffer injuries in various body parts, including shoulders, wrists, lower back, thorax, neck, rotator cuffs, arms and elbows.

Due to the high rates of repetitive motion injuries among housekeepers, the Southern California Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (SoCalCOSH) and two housekeepers from a hotel in Los Angeles filed a complaint with Cal/OSHA in May 2007. After a six-month investigation, Cal/OSHA issued citations, concluding that the hotel had violated California safety and health law by failing to minimize the risk of ergonomic injury to its housekeepers, failing to train the housekeepers properly, and violating other health and safety regulations. Len Welsh, head of Cal/OSHA, noted that the hotel had not adopted policies to alleviate repetitive motion injuries that some other hotels have adopted, such as giving workers leeway to break up tasks with rest time to prevent injuries. This was a landmark citation, in that it was the first ever of its kind issued in the hotel industry.

As the Coordinator of SoCalCOSH and a WOSH Trainer, Eden Flynn collaborated with organizers from UNITE-HERE! in providing support for the housekeepers throughout the process of filing the complaint. The first step was to educate the housekeepers about the details of the ergonomics standard (California is the only state that has one),



*City Councilwoman Janice Hahn with hotel workers speaking at the November 15, 2007 Cal-OSHA press conference*

as well as the process involved in filing an ergonomics complaint with Cal/OSHA. Eden also coordinated face-to-face meetings between the housekeepers and Cal/OSHA Inspectors so that the workers themselves had an opportunity to provide information about the nature of their work and injuries, while also gaining more insight into how Cal/OSHA functions.

Housekeeper Adela Barrientos, one of the two hotel workers named in the complaint, stated for the LA Times that her work had become harder in the nine years she had worked for the hotel. "They keep putting more things in the room," she said, and haven't reduced her assignment to clean 16 rooms each day. The injuries experienced by the housekeepers are illustrative of how serious the situation can become if workload issues and working conditions are not addressed adequately. However, the fact that the housekeepers and SoCalCOSH took the steps involved in filing an ergonomics complaint, which ultimately led to a Cal/OSHA citation, might potentially lay the groundwork for changes in working conditions that could help reduce the rate of injuries among housekeepers in the hotel industry. At the very least, the citation will help shed light on the health and safety hazards facing housekeepers, as well as some of the ways in which workers and advocacy groups can work together to create healthier and safer workplaces.

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*Leonel Yoque at the Ventanilla de Salud*

## The Loss of a Worker's Life or Health is Never an Acceptable "Trait of the Trade"!

By Deogracia Cornelio, UCLA-LOSH

News and government agency reports convey the gruesome and unnecessary deaths of workers who fell down elevator shafts, who were crushed between forklifts and other equipment, who were hit while flagging a dump truck or rigging an unsecured load, or who were sent into confined spaces with deadly gas.

Recent incidents have brought attention to construction safety. Aside from the falling cranes in New York and Pennsylvania, there has been a streak of accidents that took the lives of a dozen workers in 16 months in Las Vegas. Many workers accept that construction work is hazardous. However, these fatal accidents have been attributed to working at a fast pace and to disregard for "routine safety precautions." In other words, they happened because safety was overlooked to favor production and profit goals.



Workers and WOSH Specialists in particular need to know the facts and be prepared to promote awareness of better working conditions that

help prevent accidents. Precisely because construction work can be so hazardous, safety measures need to be at their highest standards. The loss of a worker's life or health is never an acceptable "trait of the trade"!

### What is important to know?\*

In 2007, the most recent year with figures available, the rate of work-related deaths nationwide from injuries in construction was 10.3 per 100,000 workers, in contrast with an overall rate of 3.7 work-related deaths per 100,000 workers in all industries. The construction sector had the highest number of fatal injuries in 2007, and it had the fourth highest fatality rate of all industries.

Questions remain unanswered about what is happening in construction worksites to explain this situation; however, one explanation may be that in times of economic distress, some of the most vulnerable workers are concentrated in the industry.

Latinos, the fastest-growing ethnic group in the country, comprised 5.8% of the construction workforce in 1980. This increased to 23% in 2005 and is expected to increase to 36% in the next decade. In some states, Latinos now form the majority of the construction workforce. Most Latinos in construction (75%) are new immigrants.

Foreign-born workers (as a whole) have higher rates of job-related fatalities than other workers. While



the number of foreign-born workers increased by 22% between 1996 and 2000, these workers suffered a 43% increase in fatalities (all occupations combined). In large part, this higher risk is related to the fact that immigrant workers are more concentrated in dangerous occupations like construction.

### What can WOSH Specialists do?

As WOSH Specialists know, the easy answer is that someone did something wrong. However, accident investigations reveal that preventive measures were not in place and that workers were not trained! To protect the life of workers then, it is necessary for employers to invest time and resources in safety, for workers and unions to be prepared to promote awareness of better working conditions, and for government agencies to develop and enforce comprehensive laws. As a result of their training, WOSH Specialists are inspired to get involved in the workplace and the community to help make positive change happen.

*\*Data and content about the four hazards are from Focus on Prevention: The Top Four Construction Hazards, a training program by the State Building & Construction Trades Council of California, AFL-CIO and funded by Federal OSHA. LOSH participated in the facilitation of this training program in California. For more information go to [www.sbctc.org](http://www.sbctc.org).*

## Focus on Prevention: The Top Four Construction Hazards\*



### Falls (from higher floors, platforms, scaffolds, roofs)

Falls are the number one killer of construction workers on the job. If you are working above 7.5 feet (or 15 feet for residential framing), you must have at least one form of fall protection: guardrails, harnesses or safety nets. Many deadly falls are less than 16 feet and are caused by unprotected roof edges and floor holes, or by poor construction and use of scaffolds and ladders. Remember, catching yourself during a fall only happens in the movies!



### Struck-by Hazards (falling objects, flying objects, vehicles)

Did you know that three out of four "struck-by" fatalities involve heavy equipment? Did you know that nail guns should be treated as if they were loaded guns? Fragments that fly out can hit with the force of a bullet and may cause a severe or fatal injury. Make sure you get proper training on how to work safely on roads, around vehicles, and on how to use power tools. Workers need to know to stay where drivers can see them and to keep a clear safety zone around heavy equipment.



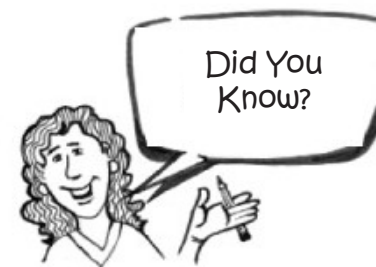
### Electrical Shock (overhead power lines, power tools and cords, outlets, temporary wiring)

Over 60% of deaths caused by electrocutions are workers who are not electricians! That is because most workers are not trained to understand electrical hazards. We do not know that: most electrocutions are caused when workers, tools or heavy equipment come into contact with power lines; every three days a worker is killed by electricity in the U.S; electrical hazards cause 12% of the deaths on the job of all young workers; and workers can be killed by ordinary household current! Be aware that power lines should be de-energized before any work is done around them and that a safety zone of AT LEAST 10 feet should be maintained.



### Caught-in/between Hazards (trench cave-in, unguarded machinery, pinned by heavy equipment)

Many workers think that they can climb out of a trench in case of a cave-in, but cave-ins happen suddenly and with no warning, AND, soil falls faster than we can escape! Did you know that a cubic yard of soil can weigh up to 4,000 pounds—almost the weight of a small pick-up truck? OSHA recommends that in a trench 4 feet or deeper workers should have a ladder within 25 feet to climb in and out. If the trench is 5 feet or deeper, it must be protected through sloping, benching, shoring or shielding.



- In 2007, there were 2,094 federal and state OSHA inspectors responsible for enforcing the law at approximately eight million workplaces!
- California has 74,013 workers per Cal/OSHA inspector, which is a lower concentration of inspectors than the national average (66,354).\*\*

\*\*Findings based on federal inspector data, 2006 workforce data, and 2008 AFL-CIO Death on the Job Report.

## YWLA Youth Mentor Project 2008

By Nancy Morales, UCLA -LOSH

A group of seven youth mentors, five from the Greater Los Angeles area and two from San Diego, developed a plan to promote workers rights and responsibilities at the annual 2008 Young Worker Leadership Academy (YWLA). As YWLA alumni, they returned to the academy and received in depth leadership skills and additional workplace health and safety training. The Youth Mentors also decided to educate and promote immigrant worker rights through a 30-second video Public Service Announcement (PSA).

They interviewed workers from day laborers to student workers at several public spaces, such as parks and city colleges. Several of the workers they encountered were not aware of their health and safety protections under Cal/OSHA. The Youth Mentors personally developed the interview questions, distributed UCLA-LOSH

resource pamphlets, and identified outside resources to edit and produce the PSA.

The video PSA is a short but impactful presentation that can be viewed at places such as job fairs, conferences, and other special venues appropriate for at-risk workers. It was first shown in a San Diego local high school and then at the Peace Jam event held in Los Angeles during May is Safe Jobs for Youth Month. The Youth Mentors gave a "Know your Rights" workshop, where resources were distributed and the PSA was shown. The audience of mostly youth had positive feedback and recommended the PSA definitely be screened at more public spaces!

The Youth Mentors went on to educate youth on workplace rights at the Peace Jam Conference held September 11-13, 2008, at Loyola Marymount



University. The conference, sponsored by the Los Angeles Peace Collective, involved various organizations which joined to foster a movement of peace and non-violence in Los Angeles. The Peace Jam Conference even brought several Nobel Peace Laureates to inspire youth for a global call to action and to kick off a campaign of service learning projects promoting peace and non-violence in the next ten years.

The PSA is now available online, on a website created by Veronica Reyes, Youth Mentor, at [http://www.freewebs.com/know\\_ur\\_rights/apps/videos](http://www.freewebs.com/know_ur_rights/apps/videos) and [www.losch.ucla.edu](http://www.losch.ucla.edu)

## Future Leaders of California: Monte Butler, Youth Mentor 2008



Monte Butler speaking at Workers Memorial Day 2008

Monte Butler III, now 17 years old, has promising visions for himself and his South Central Los Angeles community and has truly shown youth leadership and growth. Monte first participated at the Young Worker Leadership Academy (YWLA), part of the Worker Occupational Safety and Health Training and Education Program (WOSHTEP), in 2007 at UC Berkeley with his close friends Donovan, Davale, and Brandon, known as the Fabulous 4 team.

After receiving workplace health and safety training, materials and

leadership development, the Fab 4 entered the 2007 Safe Jobs for Youth Month Public Service Announcement (PSA) contest and won first prize! The winning PSA was shown to several working youth and was recently promoted at the PeaceJam Slam, a one-day youth conference hosted by the Cesar Chavez Foundation. You may view their PSA at [www.youngworkers.org](http://www.youngworkers.org).

Monte then returned to the YWLA in 2008 as a Youth Mentor and has continuously shown interest in promoting and educating his peers on their rights in the workplace! He believes educating the community about workplace health and safety issues is important and connects this with globalization, which he wants to understand and learn more about.

Monte has always been willing to lend his youth voice and to speak on youth workers' rights! For example, on April 26, 2008, he was one of three youth spokespersons for the Workers Memorial Day Panel. He explained why it was important to have youth

involved in promoting and educating about workplace issues. Monte then contributed much of his own time to develop and complete a project that educates and promotes immigrant workers rights.

*"I feel that it's important for teens to learn workplace health and safety because many are inexperienced workers and are more likely to get injuries at the workplace than somebody who is older" - Monte Butler*

The UCLA-LOSH Youth Project looks forward to working on future projects with Monte and with other future young worker leaders. For more information on the Youth Project and YWLA, please contact Nancy Morales, Youth Project Coordinator 310.794.5996; [moralesn@ucla.edu](mailto:moralesn@ucla.edu) or visit [www.losch.ucla.edu](http://www.losch.ucla.edu)

## New Partnership to Reach Korean Restaurant Owners and Managers

By Laurie Kominski, UCLA-LOSH



Participants, KIWA Training

This summer, UCLA-LOSH's WOSHTEP Program in partnership with the Koreatown Immigrant Worker Alliance (KIWA) offered the first ever WOSHTEP Small Business training in Korean. WOSHTEP staff collaborated with KIWA Director Danny Park and KIWA Board Members Dr. Mi-Jung Lee and Young Hui Kim, a former journalist, to adapt and translate WOSHTEP materials for Korean small business owners and managers. On July 17th Dr. Lee taught the WOSHTEP Small Business training to approximately 25 restaurant owners, KIWA staff, board members, insurance brokers and even a reporter for the Korea Times Los Angeles.

UCLA-LOSH staff will continue working in collaboration with KIWA, Ki Young Lee, head of the Los Angeles Korean American Restaurant Association, and other business groups such as grocers, dry cleaners, apparel manufacturers, and insurance brokers to offer a series of health and safety training seminars in Korean. It is expected that the translated materials will help small business owners to identify ways to prevent injuries at their workplace and to meet Cal/OSHA training requirements for employees. In addition, 3 KIWA staff and 1 board member recently became WOSH Specialists and are looking forward to becoming WOSH trainers.



Mi-Jung Lee, Facilitator

## QUESTION FROM THE PARKING LOT:

### What is Cal/OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program (VPP)?

The California Voluntary Protection Program (Cal/VPP) STAR is a labor-management-government cooperative program designed to recognize workplaces that manage outstanding health and safety management systems for protection of workers and go beyond minimal compliance with the Cal/OSHA Title 8 standards. The sites with Cal/VPP culture have knowledgeable employees and management who work together in partnership with Cal/OSHA to systematically identify and correct hazards. The program requires continuous improvement of health and safety programs at the worksite.

When employers are approved for participation in the Cal/VPP STAR, they are removed from the routine compliance program inspection lists. However, employers are not removed from valid employee safety and health complaint or fatality/catastrophe investigations. This frees

Cal/OSHA's inspection resources for visits to other establishments and industries. As the result of Cal/VPP STAR program, participants enter into a new relationship with Cal/OSHA in which safety and health problems can be approached cooperatively, when they arise.

Participation in Cal/VPP does not diminish or enhance existing employer and employee rights and responsibilities under the Labor Code. The program is not intended to increase or reduce the liability of any party at an approved Cal/VPP site. Cal/VPP is voluntary, and employers are not required to participate in the program. However, compliance with Cal/OSHA standards and applicable laws will remain mandatory for all employers.

For more information on Cal/VPP please visit <http://www.dir.ca.gov/DOSH>.