

Biography



Rob Ellis
Honourary Chair
Friends of the Canadian LifeQuilt

Rob Ellis is a father of four, a small business owner and a man with a passion — young worker health and safety. In February 1999, Mr. Ellis' oldest son David was killed in a workplace incident. David was only 18 years old and was working his second day of a temporary job. David died after becoming entangled in a dough mixer at a local bakery. The true tragedy behind the Ellis family nightmare is that it did not have to happen. Injuries in the workplace are predictable and preventable.

Since that horrible incident, Rob has made it his mission to educate parents, teachers, workers and employers on the importance of workplace health and safety. Today, Rob speaks at schools, parent groups, religious events and business meetings, to spread the message that it is everyone's responsibility to ensure their workplace is safe. At a recent event targeting employers, Rob challenged each guest by stating "...we give you our children...protect them."

For the past two years, Rob has also acted as a Prevention Ambassador for Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board social marketing campaign, telling David's story in television, print and radio ads.

Of course, Rob says he is inspired by David's death. No family should have to suffer what his has. But he says he is just as inspired by the memory of his son's optimism. "David would have said, 'Dad, don't get bitter, forgive and please go on and fight for my generation. It's our future!'"

Rob's commitment to promoting young worker safety was recognized by the Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA) in 2001, when he was presented with the first ever IAPA Health and Safety Community Award. In 2001, Rob was appointed the honorary Chair of the Friends of the Canadian LifeQuilt – a unique and permanent memorial dedicated to honour the young Canadian workers who have lost their lives or have been injured as a result of hazardous working conditions.

