

A playful incident turns deadly

It's been a painful three years for the Huxley family since their 29-year-old son Ryan died in a workplace incident on April 3, 2009.

That is what brings Ryan's dad Phil Huxley to the Day of Mourning on April 27 in Victoria.

"The day Ryan died I was on my way home from work when the Abbotsford Hospital called to say there was an accident," Phil says. "Ryan worked in a nursery driving a John Deere *Gator*, so I thought, at worst a broken arm or a leg."

After endless waiting at the hospital, the family was utterly shocked to learn that Ryan was gone. Ryan's sister, his fiancée — Ryan was to be married in a week — and his step-mother sat in stunned silence, disbelief, and tears.

Ryan accidentally crashed his *Gator* into a parked 40-foot semi-trailer after driving it through a mud hole. It appears he looked back to see how high the mud had sprayed and that movement caused his utility vehicle to veer into the trailer.

The family was then told they could spend time in ICU with Ryan while waiting for his heart to stop for the last time. After about an hour, Ryan's pulse started to rise. "I leaned over, kissed him and said, go with God Ryan, I love you," says Phil. His pulse instantly dropped then gradually got slower and slower until his heart stopped.

The Huxley family is doing as well as can be expected, although it's still hard and they miss Ryan terribly. Phil works hard to focus on the positives. "Number one: Ryan's eyes benefitted someone else [when they were transplanted]. Number two: Ryan's employer instantly changed the way these machines were used. Number three: the rules were put in place regarding the use and maintenance of ATVs in the workplace."

"We must make sure that proper training is done — we must not spin our tires — we must make sure that workers realize the consequences of horseplay or not paying attention. We must be safety oriented. We must work on this — employers and employees together — preventing accidents."

The other thing Phil wants is to spread the word about organ donation. "If we all signed up, there might be no waiting list at all and there would certainly be no waste. What a positive thing, in death to be able to help someone else. Think about it."

"Tell those around you that you love them as often as you can. You never know when things might change. Tell your family your wishes regarding death. Do something positive in leaving. Death is far easier to accept in this way."

For more information please contact:

Heather Young
Public Affairs Manager, WorkSafeBC
Tel: 604 214-5441
Cell: 604 818-0020