

# Red Cross responds to area fires

Now is the time for local residents to take immediate action in preventing home fires. Already this week, the Greater Palm Beach Area Chapter of the American Red Cross has responded to six major home fires within its service area. The organization has provided each of the 22 adults and children affected by these fires with immediate emergency assistance including shelter, food, clothing, smoke soap and comfort kits; all at no cost to the victims.

Assistance for families in local areas because of fire that damaged or destroyed homes included:

- Major damage to a home from a house fire on Oct. 2 on Fifth Street in Palmdale. One adult lived in the home.
- Home destroyed in fire on Oct. 3, at incident occurring on S.W. 18th Street, Okeechobee. Two adults lived in the home.
- Home destroyed in house fire on Oct. 5 on North Detil in Clewiston. Two adults and two children lived in the home.
- Home was destroyed in house fire on Oct. 6, on Azalea Street, N.W. in LaBelle. One adult and four children lived at the home.
- Home received major damage in a house fire on Oct. 6, on Azalea Street, N.W. in LaBelle. Two adults lived in the home.
- Home was destroyed in house fire on Oct. 6, on S.E. 33rd Street, Okeechobee.

Three adults lived in the home.

• Minor damage was sustained in house fire on Oct. 6, on N.W. 29th Avenue, Okeechobee. Two adults and two children lived in the home.

October is fire prevention month. During the month of October, the Red Cross will spread the message that all individuals should practice fire safety to avoid home fires. A home fire can be destructive, costly, devastating and even deadly; and often occurs without warning. Home fires present the biggest disaster threat to families across our nation. Locally, dedicated volunteer members of the Greater Palm Beach Area Chapter respond to house fires once every 30 hours, on average.

This month, individuals who serve on the organization's volunteer Speakers Bureau will increase community appearances, spreading life-saving fire safety information. Youth volunteers at the Red Cross will go door-to-door in a West Palm Beach neighborhood on October 16th, distributing English and Spanish Fire Safety Tips. Mark Goggin, Red Cross Manager of Disaster Preparedness and Response emphasizes, "Unlike other disasters, most home fires can be prevented." The Red Cross is committed to giving people the information they need to reduce their risk of home fires, and to help-

ing people recover after a fire happens.

The Red Cross encourages people to remember two key fire safety steps to protect their home and loved ones from fires: Get a smoke alarm, and have a fire escape plan.

• Some alarms save lives. Sixty-five percent of home fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms or with smoke alarms that don't work. Make sure you have a smoke alarm on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas. Test your smoke alarm once a month by pushing the test button, and replace the batteries at least once a year.

• Fires can spread throughout your home in minutes, so when every second counts, having a plan can help you escape. Home fire escape plans should include at least two ways to escape from every room of your home. Also, select a meeting spot at a safe distance from your home where family members can go after escaping. After discussing your plan with all members of your household, you should practice the plan twice a year.

Remember, home fires happen more often than hurricanes, floods or tornadoes. Take your family's life into your hands by practicing fire safety.

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**Happy Halloween ... Okeechobee County Fire Rescue has firefighting scare crows.**

## Recycle your soccer cleats

The Okeechobee County Parks & Recreation Department is accepting donations of soccer cleats and shin guards to help those who need a pair. Clean out your closet of any old or outgrown soccer cleats (in decent condition) and bring them to the Recreation Department at 640 N.W. 27th Lane (Sports Complex) between 8:30-5 p.m. Monday-Friday on or before Oct. 16. If you need a pair of cleats or shin guards and would like to swap your outgrown ones, we'd love to help! For more information, call the Recreation Department at 863-763-6950.

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