

For Immediate Release



## **American Red Cross and Columbus Public School Students Kick-Off Fire Prevention Week Friday**

**October 4, 2007** – Each year nearly 400,000 families are affected by home fires. In greater Columbus, the American Red Cross responded to 400 disasters last year, the majority of which were home fires. The average financial cost of a home fire is \$17,000 while the emotional toll fires have on families is much higher. Fires destroy the everyday essentials including clothes, shoes and dishes as well as family photos, keepsakes and other irreplaceable mementos. Fires can also lead to tragedy; every two hours someone in the US loses their life in a home fire. The American Red Cross of Greater Columbus and JP Morgan Chase have joined forces for the Safe Homes Safe Families initiative, which seeks to increase public awareness of fire safety in neighborhoods with high rates of residential fires and significantly reduce fire related incidents in those areas.

In coordination with National Fire Prevention Week, the Safe Homes Safe Families initiative posted billboards across the city featuring the artwork of five Columbus Public School students who designed posters with fire prevention messages. The winners were chosen from hundreds of entries in the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Fire Prevention Poster Contest. The winner's billboards are located in neighborhoods with high rates of residential fires and will remain up during the entire month of October.

The five winning students will be recognized at an award ceremony Friday, October 5<sup>th</sup> officially, kicking off Fire Prevention Week for the American Red Cross. The event will take place at the Schoenbaum Family Center at the Ohio State University with refreshments served at 4 p.m. and the program at 5 p.m. Media is invited to attend this event. The five winning students, their families, friends and school principals will be in attendance. Each student will receive a framed copy of their work along with a fire safety gift pack provided by Lowes.

### **Poster Contest Award Ceremony**

**Friday, October 4<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm**

The Ohio State University  
Schoenbaum Family Center  
175 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Columbus, Ohio 43201

Contest Winners and Billboard Locations are as follows:

Christian Shorter  
Weinland Park Elementary  
Billboard location: Fisher Road & Wilson Road

Faith Sutton  
Westgate Alternative Elementary  
Billboard location: 639 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue & Cleveland Avenue

- more -

## American Red Cross – Add One

Shaunice Davidson  
Arlington Park Elementary  
Billboard location: 874 Cleveland Avenue & 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue

Nicholas Martin  
Westgate Alternative Elementary  
Billboard location: 1925 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue & Woodland Avenue

Alexander J. Carte  
Westgate Alternative Elementary  
Billboard location: 3285 West Broad Street & South Hampton Avenue

In addition to the Poster Contest Ceremony, participants in the Columbus City Year program will be distributing fire safety materials in the 43201 zip code on Friday. American Red Cross canvassing efforts such as this one reached nearly 15,000 homes last year with lifesaving fire safety and prevention materials. In addition [columbus.redcross.org](http://columbus.redcross.org) will feature a special section devoted to fire safety and prevention during the month of October.

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The American Red Cross of Greater Columbus is dedicated to helping make families and communities safer at home and around the world. Sustained by over 700 volunteers, the Red Cross provides assistance to nearly 500 families each year after home fires and other disasters strike. Last year the organization trained and educated more than 113,000 area residents in vital lifesaving skills like first aid, CPR and how to prepare for emergencies. The Red Cross also sent more than 800 emergency messages between members of the military and their families. The community transportation program provides rides to medical appointments for seniors and individuals with disabilities, logging nearly 17,000 trips last year. All these programs and more are made possible by the donations of time and money from the greater Columbus community.

Michael Carroll is the CEO of the American Red Cross of Greater Columbus and Michael Schoedinger serves as the board chair.

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