



**American
Red Cross**

of Greater Columbus

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

American Red Cross Responds to Four Home Fires Overnight

Home fires darken what should be a bright holiday season

January 5, 2008 – Four families found themselves out in the cold after fire damaged or destroyed their homes overnight. Comforted by American Red Cross volunteers, these four families join more than 100 other local residents who faced disaster in what should have been a joyful holiday season.

While home fires are unfortunately common in the winter months, this holiday season has been especially difficult for families as they struggle to enjoy what should be a joyful time of the year. American Red Cross of Greater Columbus volunteers have cared for families at the scenes of 27 home fires in the past three weeks, five fewer than the entire month of December 2006. Since Dec. 17, more than \$17,000, donated by members of the greater Columbus community, has been spent to assure these families have a warm place to stay, food in their stomachs and clothes on their backs while they began to assess the damage to their family and their belongings.

The Red Cross encourages everyone to take special care with candles, cigarettes, space heaters and while cooking as these are some of the more frequent causes of home fires. Individuals are also encouraged to make a financial donation to their local Red Cross so that families will continue to get the support they need when disaster strikes. Winter safety tips are available at columbus.redcross.org.

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 600 volunteers, the Red Cross provides assistance to more than 500 families each year after home fires and other disasters strike. Last year the organization trained and educated more than 97,000 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 more than 19,600 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 board chair.

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