



**American
Red Cross**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jenny Antonacci
Manager, Community Relations
Office: (217) 787-7602 x232

May 21, 2006

American Red Cross Responds to Fires over Weekend

Springfield, IL: The American Red Cross Illinois Capital Area Chapter responded to two fires this weekend, one occurring at 404 Black Hills Drive in Taylorville and one occurring at 1526 Cummings Road in Springfield. Both fires occurred on Saturday, May 20, 2006.

The Red Cross provided assistance with food, clothing and shelter for the two families displaced at Cummings road, totaling seven individuals affected. Caseworkers met with the family early Saturday morning to assess their needs.

Members of the Red Cross Disaster Action Team were dispatched to Taylorville, providing assistance with food, clothing and shelter for the five individuals displaced by the fire.

The American Red Cross has Disaster Action Team members on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide immediate assistance to victims of disasters.

Fire safety tips for the home:

- Install smoke alarms inside and outside each sleeping area, right outside the kitchen, and on every level of your home.
- Test smoke alarms once a month by pushing the test button on each alarm. If it does not work, replace the battery and test again. If it still does not work, replace the alarm.
- Replace the battery in all smoke alarms at least once a year.
- Replace smoke alarms that are 10 or more years old.
- Draw a floor plan for each level of your home. Pick two ways out of each room. Practice escaping from each room twice a year.
- Plug only one plug into each electric outlet.
- Run extension cords only on top of floors and carpets-not under them.
- Have the heating system checked by a professional once a year to make sure it is in proper working order.
- Have chimney(s) and flue(s) inspected once a year by a professional and cleaned as recommended.
- Use flashlights for emergency lighting if you lose power. Do not use candles.

On average, the Red Cross, Illinois Capital Area Chapter responds to a disaster every three days. Last year alone responding to more than 115 disaster incidents, including 104 house fires, 2 incidents of flooding, 1 winter storm, 1 windstorm, 1 transportation accident, and 6 other incidents, providing emergency assistance to 534 individuals.

The community can help those affected by future disasters by making a contribution the Local Disaster Relief Fund. All American Red Cross disaster assistance is free, made possible by voluntary donations of time and money from the American people. To help the Red Cross continue to save lives, contributions can be made to the American Red Cross Local Disaster Relief Fund by calling (217) 787-7602. Contributions may also be sent to the Illinois Capital Area Chapter P.O. Box 1058, 1045 Outer Park Dr., Springfield, IL 62704-1058.