



Greater Kalamazoo Area Chapter
*Serving the people of Allegan, Cass, Kalamazoo
and St. Joseph Counties*
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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RISING TOLL OF HOME FIRES STRAINS RESOURCES OF LOCAL RED CROSS

KALAMAZOO, MI, - April 7, 2008 – Locally as well as nationally the number of home fires is on the rise. In the greater Kalamazoo area, the number of multiple-family, multiple-unit, home fires is up dramatically. Fires in Allegan, Cass and Kalamazoo counties affected 48 residents within the last two weeks. “We are on the verge of exceeding our annual budget for local disaster assistance,” said Tom Sivak, Director of Emergency Services for the Greater Kalamazoo Area Chapter. “The increase in fires this year prompts us to make a special call for assistance at this time,” he added.

During its last fiscal year the Chapter provided assistance for 15 multiple-family fires. As the last quarter of the current fiscal year begins, the Chapter has responded to 20 multiple-family fires, an increase of 33%. This includes the Ravine Apartments fire, 2 fires at Lake Forest Apartments and the most recent at Nottingham Apartments.

Local donations support local disaster relief efforts and the local Red Cross Chapter needs financial support now to continue to provide this critical emergency assistance immediately, as disasters happen. One hundred fifty-five people, received emergency-fire-related assistance from the Red Cross in 2007; to date in 2008, your local Red Cross Chapter has assisted 202 individuals with fire-related needs. ***Please help the victims of house fires in our community by making an unrestricted financial gift to the Local Disaster Relief Fund of the Greater Kalamazoo Area Chapter of the American Red Cross.*** With your continued support we will continue to be there to help when the tragedy of home fire touches our neighbors and families.

Eighty percent of Americans do not realize that home fires are the single most common disaster across the nation. Many people do not realize that when the local fire department responds to a fire,

the Red Cross also answers the call. Your local Red Cross Disaster Action Teams are on call 24-hours-a-day, every day of the week, and every holiday. These dedicated and trained volunteers leave family, friends, meals and celebrations to meet the emergency needs of those affected by fire.

The average cost of a home fire has been reported by the U.S. Fire Administration to be more than \$17,000. The Red Cross provides for the immediate-disaster-caused needs of fire victims with assistance for shelter, clothing, food and medications. The residents of Allegan, Cass, Kalamazoo and St. Joseph counties count on the Greater Kalamazoo Area Chapter of the American Red Cross for this emergency assistance. But without the generous donations of the citizens in our area there would be no funds to meet these needs.

Financial donations to the Local Disaster Relief Fund can be mailed to: Greater Kalamazoo Area Chapter American Red Cross at 5640 Venture Ct., Kalamazoo, MI 49009. For more information on the American Red Cross you can visit the Chapter's website at www.greaterkzooredcross.org. For more information on the American Red Cross and its role in disaster response, visit its website at www.redcross.org.

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