



**American  
Red Cross**  
Greater Kalamazoo Area



5640 Venture Ct.  
Kalamazoo, MI 49009  
[www.greaterkzooedcross.org](http://www.greaterkzooedcross.org)  
Serving Allegan, Cass,  
Kalamazoo, St. Joseph County

## NEWS RELEASE

**Contact:** Vicki Eichstaedt  
Phone: (269) 353-6180  
Extension: 116  
[eichstaedt@greaterkzooedcross.org](mailto:eichstaedt@greaterkzooedcross.org)

### **Greater Kalamazoo Area Red Cross Encourages Families to Talk to Children about Home Fire Safety**

**Kalamazoo, MI, October 8, 2009**—The American Red Cross is offering tips parents to reduce their risk of fires and talk with their children about fire safety.

“Parents can reduce their risk of home fires by taking a few simple steps,” said Tom Sivak, Director of Emergency Services for the Greater Kalamazoo Area Chapter. “We want families to have the information and resources they need to educate their children and reduce their risk of a home fire tragedy.”

The American Red Cross recommends that adults:

- ✓ Keep matches, lighters and other ignitable substances in a secured location out of the reach of children.
- ✓ Always dress children in pajamas that meet federal flammability standards. Avoid loose-fitting, 100-percent cotton garments.
- ✓ Develop and practice your home fire escape plan with your children at least twice a year.
- ✓ Familiarize children with the sound of your smoke alarm and teach them what to do when they hear it.
- ✓ Teach your children not to be scared of firefighters. Take them to your local fire department to meet them, see the gear they wear, and learn about fire safety and prevention.
- ✓ Teach your children to tell you or a responsible adult when they find matches or lighters at home or school.
- ✓ Check under beds and in closets for burnt matches; evidence your child may be playing with fire.
- ✓ Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas. Having a working smoke alarm reduces the risk of dying in a home fire by nearly half.

For more Red Cross fire safety and preparedness information, visit [www.redcross.org/homefires](http://www.redcross.org/homefires).

The Red Cross depends on the generous support of the residents of Allegan, Cass, Kalamazoo and St. Joseph counties to be ready to respond and help our neighbors who are affected by home fires. You can help your neighbors recover from disasters like home fires by making a donation to the Local Disaster Relief Fund today. To make a financial donation please visit the chapter's website, [www.greaterkzooedcross.org](http://www.greaterkzooedcross.org), call (269) 353-6180, or mail a check to Greater Kalamazoo Area Chapter of the American Red Cross, 5640 Venture Ct., Kalamazoo, MI 49009.

#### **About the American Red Cross:**

*The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and counsels victims of disasters; provides nearly half of the nation's blood supply; teaches lifesaving skills; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a charitable organization – not a government agency- and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its humanitarian mission. For more information on the Greater Kalamazoo Area Chapter of the American Red Cross, please visit [www.greaterkzooedcross.org](http://www.greaterkzooedcross.org).*