

The Handprints On The Wall...

How fire safety education saved lives.

Once the blaze of a 12-unit apartment complex in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania was knocked down, fire investigators made several startling discoveries. One was the charred body of an unidentified man located on the second floor landing of the building.

The other was a series of small sooty handprints along a stairwell's wall. It was then firefighters knew some children had done exactly what they had been taught in the department's Fire Safety House. The children had kept their hands in contact with the wall while exiting the burning building. All the residents of the apartment complex escaped unharmed.

On October 1, 2003, the three-alarm fire at the 12-unit complex in Bethlehem displaced 49 people, including 15 children. Several days later, the victim of the fire was identified as Joginder Singh, who had doused himself with 33 cents worth of gasoline and set himself ablaze. Nine days previously, a judge had ordered him to stay away from his wife and children who resided in the apartment complex.

Lt. Tony Facchiano of the Bethlehem Fire Dept. personally saw the handprints of at least one child on the wall.

"The child that left the handprints had gone down the stairs on all fours keeping their hand in contact with the wall," he wrote to Fire Commissioner Kevin Moyzan. "If anyone had any questions as to whether the time we spend running this [fire safety] program does any good,



This **SCOTTY** Fire Safety House HD-35PC is the same model that is used in the Bethlehem Fire Department's Fire Safety Program.

this incident would most certainly prove that it does. All the hours spent running this program is definitely not in vain."

Capt. Guy Elliott, also of the Bethlehem Fire Dept., said when Facchiano told him about the handprints, he wasn't surprised.

"We cover 22 schools altogether with our fire safety lessons," said Elliott. "We got our fire safety house in May 2001 and we run our program all year long. We had 2,592 children and 347 adults go through the house in 2002. The children like to go through it again and again."

The Bethlehem Fire Dept. received their fire safety house through the Burn Prevention Foundation, headquartered in Allentown, PA. Incorporated in 1986, the nonprofit foundation's mission is to provide burn injury prevention to and advocacy for those at greatest risk. One

of its services, the Kid's Fire Safety House Program, provides valuable fire safety education to children ages 5 through 9 throughout eastern PA. The foundation has purchased five **SCOTTY** Fire Safety Houses for use in this program.

"Our initial purchase of a fire safety house was through the Aluminum Cans for Burned Children Foundation," said Dan Dillard, executive director of the Burn Prevention Foundation. "We collected over one million aluminum cans to obtain our first fire safety house. Since then, we've conducted a number of capital campaigns and joined with corporate sponsors to help with the purchases."

Their fire safety program is delivered to children and other at-risk populations

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Gearing up for the '04 FEMA Fire Act Grant

For the past two years, John Loeber of the Midway Fire Dept. in North Carolina, has served as a peer reviewer for the annual Fire Act Grant program. He's hoping he'll be called again this year to do his part to help other fire departments get a piece of the \$750 million '04 Fire Act Grant pie.

"Peer review typically runs four weeks at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland," said Loeber. "Each peer reviewer is asked to serve

for one week only so the integrity of the program remains high. Plus, it gives the review process balance."

Peer reviewers are sequestered in separate rooms at the academy. When they leave the rooms for meal breaks, the reviewers are forbidden to discuss any application. Technical advisors are placed in each peer review room to answer any technical question during the process.

"There are absolutely no politics involved in this," Loeber added. "You have to watch for any conflict of interest, such as if you know someone from the department whose application you're reviewing, or if you're reviewing an application from your own state or your friends. You must excuse yourself from scoring that application. It's a very strict process."

Evaluation sheets are used to score each application. 100 is the perfect score.

"The application that receive a score of 100 usually meets all the requirements of the grant and show a definite need," said Loeber. "This can happen whether the narrative is grammatically correct or there are mistakes in the grammar, just as long as the grant narrative can be understood."



A FEMA Grant Recipient for 2002, the City of Clovis New Mexico selected a 36 foot fifth wheel **SCOTTY** for their fire safety program.

This photo was taken before leaving our Pennsylvania facility.

Each application is read and scored by three peer reviewers. The team leader then reviews the individual application's scores. If there is a large discrepancy in scoring, the application must be discussed. After it is reviewed and scored, the three scores are averaged to get the final tally.

"The highest scored applications are forwarded to the technical evaluation panel," said Loeber. "The application is very specific and you must follow it. If you make mistakes, it can knock you out of the running for the grant. Last year, over 19,000 applications were turned into FEMA out of 32,000 fire departments in the U.S. It's a shame more departments don't put in for this money."

The start date for the '04 Fire Act Grant is March 1st and ends on April 2nd. Official guidelines will be available on the U.S. Fire Administration Web site (www.usfa.fema.gov) and the Office for Domestic Preparedness Web site (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp).


"I really believe in this program," said Loeber. "It's the most fantastic thing that's happened to the fire service in a long time and I've been in the fire service for over 40 years."



Tip\$ for Winning Grants\$

When thinking about your fire safety program, think big. Include with your **SCOTTY** Fire Safety House an assortment of fire education "tools."


You can request smoke detectors, batteries, and stovetop fire suppression units for the elderly, posters for elementary schools, coloring books for the students, a fire truck cruiser robot, etc. The more complete your program is, the better it looks to FEMA grant reviewers.

Enlist the help of local community residents in forming a partnership. Elementary and secondary school teachers can write up educational curriculums geared to grade-specific students; local organizations such as the Lions Club and women business organizations can serve as volunteers during special educational events. Pair up with a national insurance agency in spreading the word about fire prevention. 

Congress provided \$750 million for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program and transferred administration of the program from FEMA to the Office for Domestic Preparedness, through the Department of Homeland Security.

Firefighters can apply for grant monies to increase the effectiveness of fire fighting operations, health and safety programs, new equipment, emergency medical services programs, and fire prevention and safety programs.

Federal grantees must obtain a DUNS number, provided by the commercial company Dun & Bradstreet. Additional information about DUNS numbers can be found on the Dun & Bradstreet web site (www.dnb.com/US/duns-update/index.html). There is no charge to obtain a DUNS number, and it is the applicant's responsibility to obtain one.

The Department of Homeland Security will open the application for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program on Monday, March 1, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. (e.s.t.). The application period will be open through 5:00 p.m. (e.s.t.) Friday, April 2, 2004. The Department invites fire departments throughout the United States to apply for assistance under this program. The Application and Program Guidelines are automated and both are accessible from the ODP Website and USFA Website. 

ODP Website

(www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp)

USFA Website

(www.usfa.fema.gov).

TECH TALK with Roger

Quality control manager at



by SCOTTY

A Factory Tour is Worth The Trip

By Roger Stoner

As quality control manager of Mobile Concepts, two of the things I most enjoy are giving a production line employee an “atta boy” for doing a fine job on a difficult task and touring customers through our factory.

When you tour our factory, you’ll see an ordinary production day complete with wood chips and plenty of sawdust. We’ve always felt our trailers are quality built from the inside to the outside. When you visit us, you can see this as well. As the trailers progress through the production process, you can see how our customer’s ideas are being woven through the structure as the unit is being built, not adapted in as an afterthought.

You’ll see how the components function together, be able to feel the materials used, walk about the trailer as you explore the sizes of the rooms and their proportions, and you can visualize how smoothly your selected floor plan will work for your

needs. The tour is all about YOU! I personally enjoy hearing the stories and feeling the excitement of each tour group. Often the groups are like children on Christmas morning.

An added benefit of visiting us is seeing the faces of people who construct our vehicles. Our company hand selects employees who are personable and enjoy the



Customers from Michigan take a first look at our smooth fiberglass 31 ft. command trailer.


duties of their department. We’ve always felt a quality product can only be built if the people take pleasure in their responsibilities.

A visit from our customers also benefits us since we can then put faces to the names of our customers. Meeting and getting to

know our customers challenges me personally to make sure our product meets their total expectations. As I inspect the trailers I put myself in the position of the customers and the people who have donated towards the trailer.

You’ll notice that our pace is different than the norm in a pre-fab business. Commonly in the RV business the production line is paced in 10-minute intervals. Every 10 minutes a buzzer sounds and the trailer moves to the next station. We don’t do that. Our production floor is a beehive of activity. But the employees know they must take as much time as needed to build the trailer the right way. You’ll be able to personally witness this.

After the factory tour is completed and your notepad is filled with all kinds of new ideas, you’ll have the opportunity to sit down with our sales staff and discuss your options and budget. As you fine-tune your floor plan, you can walk back onto the production floor and study the trailers once again.

Before you purchase a new Mobile Concepts by **SCOTTY** Fire Safety House, please consider a trip to our facility in southwestern Pennsylvania. I look forward to meeting you. 

NFPA to study home fire safety behavior

When TV news stations conducted smoke detector tests and found young children were sleeping through the alarms, the National Fire Protection Association went into action.

“We immediately looked at our educational messages and made some minor adjustments,” said Judy Comoletti, NFPA’s assistant vice president of public education. “We are taking a firm stand for installing more smoke alarms in bedrooms.”

The NFPA recommends installing hard-wired, interconnected alarms inside all bedrooms.

“When one goes off, they all go off,

thereby increasing the chance of young children waking,” Comoletti said.

In addition to more smoke alarms throughout the home, parents are encouraged to be aware if their children will wake up with the smoke alarm. Having regular home escape drills is important and should include the smoke alarms going off at night.

“Parents should be aware of their children’s individual needs,” said Comoletti. “Even if a child awakens when you do your home escape planning, don’t assume that children will wake up another night because of different sleep patterns.”

The NFPA Research Foundation is con-

sidering a research project on behavior in the home. NFPA wants to study what is happening in the home during a fire drill to determine why children aren’t waking to the smoke alarms. The research project will take time.

“When the smoke alarm goes off in the home, we need to react,” Comoletti said. “Children need to recognize the sound of the smoke alarm and know what it means.”

“It is still very important to have smoke alarms and to have them working. Smoke alarms save lives. They serve as an early warning. Parents must practice with their children so they know the sound of a smoke alarm and what they need to do.”

1-800-783-0213

Give us a call...



Mobile Concepts

by SCOTTY

480 Bessemer Road

Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666

1-800-783-0213

724-542-7640

724-542-7648 FAX

www.scottyrv.com

Email us at:

adegre@scottyrv.com

(Anne Degre)

csimon@scottyrv.com

(Chris Simon)

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through the efforts of volunteer and certified firefighters who attend the foundation's in-house fire safety training program.

"We require a minimum of five instructors to run each fire safety education program in our fire safety houses," said Dillard. "At least three of the instructors must be certified through the foundation's program. Education is what makes the program successful. Not just anyone can walk into a fire safety house and use it effectively."

For 15 years, the Bethlehem Fire Department has taught children to crawl low and place their hands on walls to safely exit a burning building. That simple life-saving lesson proved successful for the 15 children who lived in the apartment complex and has proven once again that fire prevention education saves lives. 



Children are taught the importance of crawling low under smoke in the **SCOTTY** Fire Safety House

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