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American Red Cross, Greater Cleveland Chapter responds to nine-story apartment fire on Hough Avenue

CLEVELAND, Ohio – February 22, 2006 – Last night the American Red Cross, Greater Cleveland Chapter's Disaster Action Team (DAT) responded to a nine-story apartment fire at Community Circle II Apartments at 8925 Hough Ave. in Cleveland. Twenty-four apartment units were affected by the fire and more than 60 elderly residents were relocated to Thurgood Marshall Recreation Center last night. DAT members provided residents with blankets and meals at the recreation center. They also provided mass care assistance to the safety forces battling the fire.

As of this morning, the Red Cross has placed 19 residents in temporary housing and is also assisting them with other immediate needs, including food, clothing and prescription medicine.

"Plans developed by the City of Cleveland's Older Adult Preparedness Task Force were activated last night and that's why the collaboration and teamwork of local fire, police, EMS, RTA, Department of Aging and the Red Cross were able to get residents evacuated quickly and safely," said Linda DelMonico, Director of Emergency Services at the Greater Cleveland Chapter.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, elderly populations are among the most vulnerable during fires. For people who are age 65 or older, the fire death risk is twice as high as that of the average population. Of the more than 3,500 fire victims each year, more than 950 are in this age group.

"Fires involving senior citizens are usually more serious because of the medical assistance they need," said DelMonico. "They may not have time to get their medications, walkers, canes or even dentures before they are evacuated from a building."

The American Red Cross, Greater Cleveland Chapter helps people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies by providing immediate emergency assistance to families affected by disasters in Cuyahoga, Geauga and Lake counties. The Red Cross is not a government agency; it relies on donations of time and money from the American people to do its work. For more information about the Greater Cleveland Chapter, visit www.redcross-cleveland.org.

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