

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact:

Beth Thomas
Communications Coordinator
216.431.3072

**American Red Cross, Greater Cleveland Chapter
responds to house fire in Painesville**

CLEVELAND, Ohio – February 24, 2006 – On Thursday, February 23 the American Red Cross, Greater Cleveland Chapter responded to a house fire in Painesville. A family of 10 was affected by the fire and Red Cross volunteers provided them with temporary shelter, food, clothing and emotional support.

“Although many residential fires are preventable, fires can ignite quickly and without warning,” said Rick McPeak, Associate Director of Community Services for the Greater Cleveland Chapter’s Lake County office. “It is important that every family plan ahead and practice their escape route for house and apartment fires – don’t wait until they happen.”

Losing a home to a fire is a traumatic experience for anyone, but there are steps you can take all year long to minimize the threat. The Red Cross urges Americans to prepare their families for the unexpected. Develop a family disaster plan and take these steps toward fire prevention and safety:

- Replace smoke alarms that are 10 or more years old.
- Install smoke alarms inside and outside every sleeping room and on every floor of your home.
- Replace smoke alarm batteries twice a year – spring and fall – and test smoke alarms monthly to make sure they are working properly.
- Design a floor plan for each floor in your home. Pick two ways out of each room and practice escaping from each room twice a year. Be sure the floor plan is visible and available for every family member.
- Post emergency numbers near every phone for local emergency services.
- Do not use candles for lighting if the power goes out. Use flashlights only.

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.

###