



Alleghany County United Fire and Rescue (Fire Safety Training Trailer)

October 9, 2007

The smoke alarms are deafening, and your bedroom is quickly filling with smoke. You rush to the door, but when you grasp the doorknob, you find it's hot to the touch. What would you do? What would your kids do? Thanks to a \$50,000.00 grant awarded by The Alleghany Foundation, the Alleghany County United Fire and Rescue Association has purchased a fire safety trailer that can teach children safety and prevention strategies before they're confronted with an actual emergency.



Most often utilized at elementary schools, scout troop meetings, and for civic organizations, the fire safety trailer is a handicap-accessible, mobile unit specially designed to simulate the conditions of a house fire. The trailer is equipped with a living room with a fireplace, a kitchen, and two bedrooms where children can identify potential safety hazards and practice escaping from a burning home.

“The Alleghany Foundation has been a great supporter of the fire safety trailer from the beginning,” says Ryan Muterspaugh, Alleghany County Director of Public Safety. “They

recognized the need for this type of education and saw to it that we had the equipment to get our own program out into the community. The kids love it. We've had an amazing response."



Firefighters take five to eight individuals at a time inside the trailer where they are taught to identify potential fire hazards such as overloaded electrical outlets, unattended pots on the stove and combustible items too near the fireplace. A 911 telephone allows children to practice giving emergency information to a dispatcher, and a pull down alarm system gives them a chance to activate the kind of fire alarm most often used in schools and other public buildings. The tour ends in the bedroom where smoke alarms go off and the room quickly fills with simulated smoke.

"Escaping from the bedroom is definitely the most interactive and the most popular activity with the kids," laughs Muterspaugh. "But it's also very important. They get to check for fire in the hallway by feeling the heated door with the backs of their hands, experience the importance of getting down low and crawling on the floor, then practice climbing through the window and down the escape ladder."

Those waiting outside for their turn to be taken through the trailer aren't sitting idly. "They're learning, too," says Muterspaugh. "There's a big screen T.V. cabinet on a covered exterior of the trailer where we can show fire safety and prevention DVD's."

"We see the impression the fire safety trailer makes, and we can't thank The Allegheny Foundation enough for making this program possible," adds Muterspaugh. "People remember about 20 % of what they hear but about 80% of what they do. Kids who participated in 2nd or 3rd grade are explaining fire prevention to the firefighters when they come back the next year. It's amazing. And enthusiastic kids go home and educate their parents."

“The Alleghany Foundation has been consistent in their support of the Alleghany United Fire and Rescue Association,” says Muterspaugh. “They’ve helped us standardize turn-out gear for all departments, and have purchased air compressors, storage tanks, and thermal imaging cameras which have become critical to locating individuals trapped in a fire. The fire safety trailer is but one example of the Foundation’s commitment to our community.”

In recognition of National Fire Safety and Prevention Week October 7th through the 14th, the trailer is scheduled to make many appearances at schools and events throughout the community.

“The Alleghany Foundation is very proud to be a part of this project, and we are pleased to see such an enthusiastic response,” says Beth Webb, Foundation executive director. “The fire safety trailer is a great interactive, educational tool that has the potential to save many lives.”

The Alleghany Foundation has awarded over \$ 24 million to the following organizations for the purpose of improving the quality of life in the Alleghany Highlands.

Alleghany County
Alleghany County Parks and Recreation
Alleghany County Public Schools
Alleghany County Sheriff's Office
Alleghany County United Fire and Rescue Association
Alleghany Health District
Alleghany Highlands Arts & Crafts Center
Alleghany Highlands Arts Council
Alleghany Highlands Community Services Board
Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Authority
Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Corporation
Alleghany Highlands Free Clinic
Alleghany Highlands Genealogical Society
Alleghany Highlands YMCA
Alleghany Historical Society
Alleghany Humane Society
Alleghany Mountain Radio
American Diabetes Association
American Red Cross
Appalfolks of America
Art Museum of Western Virginia
Bath County
Bath County Health Department
Bath County Historical Society
Blue Ridge Public Television
Boiling Springs Elementary School
Boiling Springs Fire Department
C.O.P.E.
C & O Historical Society
Callaghan Elementary School PTO
Charles P. Jones Memorial Library
City of Covington
Clifton Forge Little League
Clifton Forge Main Street
Clifton Forge Nursery School
Clifton Forge Public Library
Clifton Forge Volunteer Fire Department
Covington City Schools
Covington Fire Department
Covington Rescue Squad
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College

Diabetes Education Support Group
Falling Spring Elementary School PTO
Falling Spring Fire Department
Falling Spring Rescue Squad
Greater Alleghany Highlands School Health Consortium
Jackson River Enterprises
Jackson river Technical Center
League of Older Americans
Mill Mountain Theatre
Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District
Mountain View Elementary School PTO
Rockbridge Area Community Services Board
Safehome Systems
Science Museum of Western Virginia
Scott Hill Foundation, Inc.
Sharon Elementary School PTO
Sharon Volunteer Fire Department
Shenandoah Autism Center
Southwest Virginia AHEC
Southwest Virginia Second Harvest Foodbank
Special Olympics
Total Action Against Poverty
Town of Clifton Forge
Town of Iron Gate
Unified Human Services Transportation System (RADAR)
West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine
Western Virginia Emergency Medical Service Council