

## **Non-Profit News**

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### **Local Volunteers Are Needed To Deliver Services**

Recent home fires have left many concerned about family safety. Like many people, Marlene Fike, a Red Cross client living in Pennsylvania, never thought it could happen to her, but it did.

When her bedroom door burst open, Mrs. Fike could see the outside of the door was charred and smoke filled the hallway. Very calmly a volunteer fireman told her there was fire in the home and then he led her down the narrow hallway, through the kitchen and out of the house. "By the time we reached the kitchen," Mrs. Fike said, "my hair was singed, my eyebrows were gone, and my glasses were beginning to melt on my face." Before the firefighter burst into the bedroom, Ms. Fike had been calmly talking on the telephone totally unaware of the fire, which had begun at the other end of the house.

This fire, like so many, began quickly and spread throughout the home, fully engulfing and destroying the structure in about 20 minutes. As a result of the fire both Mrs. Fike and her husband found themselves with only the clothes on their backs. Such a loss has a profound effect on a family. "Rebuilding your life after a fire takes a long time," Mrs. Fike said. "The next morning I found myself on my daughter's couch just numb inside; then a Red Cross volunteer arrived offering help. The Red Cross immediately helped us get the clothing and all the basic necessities we needed. Then they continued to check on our family long after the fire," Mrs. Fike indicated. It took the family nine months of living out of totes in a camper, but today they have a new home sitting on the same property.

As in Mrs. Fike's case, most of the work done by the American Red Cross is done by volunteers. We need your help to continue to help families like the Fike's in our community. You can help by getting trained to help families after a disaster and volunteering your services to help those in need.

The Red Cross will present a Disaster Training Institute May 6-9 at Southern Union in Opelika. Classes offered will give you the skills and knowledge you need to help others after disasters such as house and apartment fires, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, hazardous materials spills and more. The classes are free and you decide how and when you respond. You can choose to volunteer only locally or to travel to large, national disasters. You must pre-register to attend and classes are filling up fast, so please get signed up this week.

I wanted to say thank you to everyone who supported the Red Cross Volunteer Appreciation event last Friday. It was a fabulous way to say thank you to everyone who gives of their time, talents and treasures all year long. The event was sponsored by Jackson Heating and Air, Longhorn Steakhouse, Crocs, East Alabama Medical Center, Blooming Colors, Sam's Club and The Auburn Network. Many other businesses provided door prizes and we truly appreciate the support. I am happy to announce that John Penick was named our 2007-2008 Volunteer of the Year! Check out our website this week as I will be updating it with photos and a full list of winners.

If you would more information on any local Red Cross classes or events visit [www.leeredcross.org](http://www.leeredcross.org) or call 334-749-9981. Have a good week!

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