Focus on Fire Safety in Homes...

From Voices That Know...

Common VOICES
Making a Difference...Turning Tragedy to Advocacy.

www.fireadvocates.org
Fire Sprinklers Save Lives

Our voices have joined to share our first-person real life stories... our hope is that future tragedies may be prevented by our sharing with you.
IAFC members and fire safety advocates,

On behalf of Common Voices, we are happy to share news with you about an upcoming resource that will help educate stakeholders about community fire protection and how to build fire safe homes. By partnering with allied organizations, we’re working to advance efforts that support the installation of home fire sprinklers and build upon collaboration between our respective organizations.

No one understands the effects of fire better than those who have personally experienced it. Within these pages, we will introduce you to the six Common Voices advocates and provide an overview of our Media Kit, which is slated to mail to fire safety advocates in late October. We believe that we all need to become fully involved in encouraging policymakers to adopt current national building codes that include fire sprinklers.

Common Voices partners with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and the Everyone Goes Home initiative. Vina Drennan, a founding advocate of Common Voices, also serves on the NFFF Board and does a fantastic job of helping all of us understand why residential sprinklers are so important to saving firefighter lives. We ask that you reinforce the 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives included in this insert, and utilize the new PSAs to highlight perspectives that connect to the EGH Initiatives.

Please remember that we’re here to help. If you’re looking for a speaker who can bring the fire problem to life in a meaningful way, please contact us via e-mail or phone. We will do everything within our power to meet your needs and help you convince community stakeholders about the importance of building fire safe homes that include fire sprinklers.

We also encourage you to become a part of our fire safety team! Visit us at www.fireadvocates.org for the latest news and coalition membership information. We are thrilled to be a new non-profit, and we look forward to growing our team—and hope you will become a part!

Respectfully,

Vickie

Vickie Pritchett
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Generations of family are important. Built-in fire protection protects what you value most, and since we can’t move a firefighter into our home, fire sprinklers are ready to protect us 24/7.

Choose fire sprinklers for LIFE!

www.fireadvocates.org/fresnofire.htm
Sprinklers Save Lives ... Including Firefighters

Just a few of the recent line-of-duty death report headlines indicate how dangerous modern residential fires are for firefighters:

- Career firefighter dies and two are injured when forced from three-story residence
- Volunteer firefighter dies after falling through floor at residential structure fire
- Career lieutenant and firefighter found unresponsive at structure fire
- Basement fire claims the life of volunteer firefighter

And earlier this year, the fire service mourned when two Bridgeport, Conn., firefighters died fighting a residential fire.

By reducing fire spread and intensity, residential sprinklers can save firefighters as well as homeowners. This is why fire sprinkler advocacy is one of the 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives.

Throughout the history of the fire service, we’ve always come together to find the will and the funding to implement changes that can increase firefighter safety. Fire sprinklers are the next major step in reducing firefighter LODDs.

### 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives

1. Define and advocate the need for a cultural change within the fire service relating to safety; incorporating leadership, management, supervision, accountability and personal responsibility.

2. Enhance the personal and organizational accountability for health and safety throughout the fire service.

3. Focus greater attention on the integration of risk management with incident management at all levels, including strategic, tactical, and planning responsibilities.

4. All firefighters must be empowered to stop unsafe practices.

5. Develop and implement national standards for training, qualifications, and certification (including regular recertification) that are equally applicable to all firefighters based on the duties they are expected to perform.

6. Develop and implement national medical and physical fitness standards that are equally applicable to all firefighters, based on the duties they are expected to perform.

7. Create a national research agenda and data collection system that relates to the initiatives.
8 Utilize available technology wherever it can produce higher levels of health and safety.
9 Thoroughly investigate all firefighter fatalities, injuries, and near misses.
10 Grant programs should support the implementation of safe practices and/or mandate safe practices as an eligibility requirement.
11 National standards for emergency response policies and procedures should be developed and championed.
12 National protocols for response to violent incidents should be developed and championed.
13 Firefighters and their families must have access to counseling and psychological support.
14 Public education must receive more resources and be championed as a critical fire and life safety program.
15 Advocacy must be strengthened for the enforcement of codes and the installation of home fire sprinklers.
16 Safety must be a primary consideration in the design of apparatus and equipment.

Learn more: www.EveryoneGoesHome.com
Focus on Fire Safe Homes:
From Voices That Know

Common Voices is an Advocates’ Coalition that has recently been incorporated as a non-profit. The advocates on the coalition’s Advisory Committee have all been directly affected by fire. Common Voices brings the advocates together to assist them in their quest to ensure that others will not have to endure similar tragedies.

Meet the Advocates

Justina Page—Houston, Texas
Justina Page’s life changed forever in the early morning hours of March 7, 1999. That’s when fire swept through her Houston home, killing her 22-month-old son, Amos, severely injuring his twin brother Benjamin, and leaving her with third-degree burns over 55 percent of her body. Since that day, Justina has dedicated herself to helping families affected by burn trauma. Being a burn survivor herself, as well as the mother of a burn survivor, she is uniquely qualified to deal with this problem. Justina has been trained as a SOAR (Survivors Offering Assistance and Recovery) Coordinator and peer supporter. She also works at the John S. Dunn Sr. Burn Center at Memorial Hermann Hospital and Shriners Hospital in Galveston, as well as at the Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors.

Vina Drennan—Jersey City, New Jersey
Vina Drennan is a nationally recognized advocate for fire safety. Her husband, FDNY Captain John Drennan, died from burns he sustained while fighting a fire in 1994. Since her husband’s death, Vina has testified at national, state and local government forums on behalf of fire safety awareness. She has appeared on national television and radio shows and has published articles in several national magazines. A founding member of the National Fallen Firefighter Foundation’s Fire Service Survivors Network and a founding advocate of Common Voices, Vina uses her enthusiasm and passion for fire safety to make the connections between firefighter safety and code requirements.

Amy Acton—Grand Rapids, Michigan
Amy Acton, the executive director of the Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors, has 13 years of experience in helping burn survivors. A serious electrical burn injury in 1981 temporarily sidelined her plans to become a burn nurse, but she eventually received her
degree, later managing the very burn treatment center where she’d been treated. Amy is a member of the NFPA and the American Burn Association. She is also a founding advocate of Common Voices, and brings the voices of burn survivors to the forefront as a stakeholder group directly impacted by America’s fire problem.

**Gail Minger—Niceville, Florida**
Gail Minger became an advocate for campus safety after her son Michael was killed in an arson dormitory fire at Murray (Ky.) State University. Gail successfully campaigned for the passage of the landmark Michael Minger Act in 2000, which requires public Kentucky colleges and universities to report campus crimes to their employees, students and the public on a timely basis. Over the next few years, Gail worked for the passage of four additional pieces legislation that dealt with campus fire safety. She also started the Michael H. Minger Memorial Foundation, which has subsequently received two significant grants to research campus fire safety. Gail serves as president of the Foundation and is a founding advisory board member for Common Voices as well as a member of the board of directors for Security on Campus.

**Donna Henson—Kansas City, Missouri**
On May 8, 1999, Donna Henson’s youngest son, Dominic, was killed in a fraternity house fire while attending his first year of college at the University of Missouri. There was no fire sprinkler system, no fire extinguishers, no working smoke detectors—no safety devices in place to save his life. Since that day, Donna has worked diligently to bring fire safety awareness to college housing. Along with the Columbia Fire Department and the University of Missouri, she has distributed a video called “Dominic’s Story,” which educates both parents and students on fire safety, to more than 400 colleges. Donna also continues to press our legislators, educators and fire protectors for new laws requiring sprinklers not only in college housing, but in all new and old construction across the country.

**Bonnie Woodruff—Raleigh, N.C.**
Bonnie Woodruff’s background includes working as a nurse in a burn unit and teaching fire safety to nursing students while on the faculty at University of Virginia. After her son, Ben, died in a fraternity fire at the University of North Carolina in 1996, Bonnie became an advocate for fire sprinklers. She is currently a member of the North Carolina Residential Fire Sprinkler Coalition, whose goal is to get the state to adopt the national fire sprinkler code. Campus fire safety is one of Bonnie’s main focuses, and each semester at the University of North Carolina she participates in a training session for sorority and fraternity fire marshals. Bonnie is also proud to be on a task force planning the launch of National Campus Fire Safety Month in Washington, D.C. She has been a member of Common Voices since 2007.

Add their stories to your arsenal of community education resources! Common Voices advocates can speak and provide testimony to make your message all the more powerful. Request an appearance of a Coalition member by calling 615/533-0305 or via e-mail at vickiepritchett@aol.com.
Common Voices is excited to be the recipient of a 2009 Fire Prevention grant from the Department of Homeland Security Assistance to Firefighter Act. This grant is aimed at the creation of new resources (PSAs and an entire media kit) for fire service leaders to use to educate about the value of home fire sprinklers.

If you would like a copy of the kit (slated to ship in late October), please visit www.fireadvocates.org and click on the “Fire Safe Home Media Kit” button on the homepage.

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