



A PROGRAM TO HELP SAVE LIVES AND MONEY!

Provided through the
Texas 4-H and Youth Development Program

4-H Club and
Extension Agent
Instructional Packet

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FORWARD

Dear Texas 4-H Members,

Wow! We sounded the alarm and Texas 4-H was listening! Now it's time to protect even more homes in Texas. Just think of how many lives we can protect together!

Hi, our names are Chris and Kelley Wood. We are six and two year members of the Victoria County 4-H Program in District 11. We have both been active in 4-H project areas since attending 4-H meetings as Clover Kids.

When we began the Sound the Alarm 4-H project our initial goal was to place smoke detectors in an area of our community that was unprotected. The project idea came to us after attending a funeral for four children. Our parents suggested we find a way to turn the sadness into something that could help. What started as a discussion at the supper table to help us heal the loss of a fellow 4-H'er and her siblings, has assisted the local community in an effort to prevent a future tragedy. We are happy that the "Sound the Alarm" project has protected homes with new smoke detectors. Local media coverage of the project's activities has helped make others aware of how important it is to have a working smoke detector in the home.

Thank you for supporting the "Sound the Alarm" 4-H project. With Texas 4-H working together, we know the project will help save lives and money in this great state.

With 4-H Spirit,
Christopher and Kelley Wood

A special THANK YOU to various individuals who helped create this packet and kick off the campaign.

Christopher Wood
Victoria County 4-H Member

Kelley Wood
Victoria County 4-H Member

Henry Wood
Victoria County 4-H Leader & District 11 Adult Leader
Association Chairman

Mary Martinez
Victoria County Better Living for Texans
Program Assistant

Kristy Synatschk
Victoria County Extension Agent
4-H & Youth Development

Dr. Christopher T. Boleman
Assistant Professor
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Victoria County Extension Agent
Family & Consumer Science

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Assistant Professor and Extension
4-H & Youth Development Specialist

Courtney Dodd
Extension Program Specialist
4-H and Youth Development

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Assistant Lifestyles Editor and
Communications Specialist

Roseanne Wagner
Victoria County Administrative Assistant

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4-H FACT:

The Texas 4-H and Youth Development Program is the largest 4-H program in the United States. Texas 4-H involves more than 950,000 youth annually in its programs delivered by 249 county Extension offices.

For more information about the Texas 4-H and Youth Development Program contact your county Extension office.

PACKET CONTENTS

FIRE FACT:

Each year, fire claims the lives of 4,000 Americans and injures 20,000!

Source:
U.S. Fire Administration

- Foreward: By Christopher and Kelley Wood, Victoria County
- Packet Contents:
- One-Pager: Report about the very first "Sound the Alarm" Project
- Checklist: For Extension agents and/or 4-H clubs
- News Releases: #1 – Announcing smoke alarm collection
#2 – Information about smoke alarms and preventing house fires
- Newsletter Insert: Include in your monthly 4-H newsletter!
- Flyer: Distribute around town to advertise the "Sound the Alarm" Campaign
- Report Form: To be completed at conclusion of your county's/club's project

THE NEED FOR SUCH A PROGRAM

FIRE FACT:

Children are one of the highest risk groups for deaths in residential fires. At home, children usually play with fire - lighters, matches, and other ignitables - in bedrooms, in closets, and under beds. These are "secret" places where there are a lot of things that catch fire easily.

- Children of all ages set over 35,000 fires annually.

- Every year over 400 children nine years and younger die in home fires.

Source:
U.S. Fire Administration

Relevance

The National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) reports that home fires continue to be the number one cause of fire deaths. Research shows that most fatal fires occur at night, between 10 pm and 6 am, while most individuals are sleeping (U.S. Fire Administration). Inhalation of smoke and poison gasses is the leading cause of death in fires and kill long before the flames reach the victim. According to the Standard on Household Fire Warning Equipment (NFPA 74), minimum protection requires smoke alarms outside each bedroom and on each additional level of a house, including the basement. Roughly half of home fire deaths result from fires in the small percentage (4%) of homes with no smoke alarms (NFPA). Homes with smoke alarms typically have a death rate that is 40-50% less than the rate for homes without alarms (NFPA).

Community Impact. On January 18, 2006, two Patti Welder Magnet Middle School students, ages 11 and 13, died as a result of smoke inhalation in a house fire. Also killed were their two siblings, ages 3 and 2.

Response

Victoria County 4-H members wanted to keep such a tragedy from happening again. After attending the funeral, Christopher Wood and his sister, Kelley, started the "Sound the Alarm" Program. Their parents, Henry and Karen, provided unlimited support and encouragement as this idea grew into their 4-H club service project. In only a short amount of time, Christopher and Kelley's project reached far beyond the boundaries of their Mission Valley 4-H Club and partnered with Victoria Fire Department and Victoria Independent School District. The "Sound the Alarm" program seeks donations of smoke alarms which are distributed to low-income families in the community who do not have a working smoke alarm in their home.

Results

Through collaboration with a local church, the project collected:

- 363 smoke alarms that were placed into Victoria County homes that were previously unprotected (as of 8-11-06). These alarms could save as many as 998 lives (2.75 persons per household according to U.S. Census 2000). Donations have come from churches, Extension support groups, 4-H members and leaders and private citizens.
- The estimated value for these alarms is \$1,815.

These smoke alarms have been distributed and installed by volunteers to interested citizens. This has been achieved by volunteers and 4-H members personally knocking on the doors of homes or leaving a door hanger with information on obtaining a free smoke alarm through this program. Smoke alarms have also been distributed to students identified by Victoria Independent School District as having a need for one.

IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

FIRE FACT:

Self-reliance is the rule for fire safety for many people. If you live in an area where the local fire department is more than a few minutes away because of travel time or distance, or if you are outside the limits of the nearest town, be sure you know how to be self-reliant in a fire emergency.

- Maintain home heating systems.
- Have a fire safety and evacuation plan.
- Make your home fire-resistant.
- Let your landscape defend your property.
- Follow local burning laws.

Source:

U.S. Fire Administration

- Contact your local fire department.
- Form planning committee, if needed. Facilitate meeting of the planning committee in order to complete the program checklist.
- Discuss and make plans for local collection and distribution of smoke alarms.
 - Identify collection sites.
 - Identify distribution plan (families identified through schools, churches, fire departments, local government, food bank, etc.).
- Distribute informational flyers. Example flyer is included in packet.
- Set up collection sites.
- Contact local retail store (Wal-Mart, Lowes, Home Depot, local hardware stores) about purchasing smoke alarms. Inquire about a discount or the potential for a large purchase.
- Submit news release #1 to the local media (first of October), announcing the collection campaign.
- Include information about the campaign in your October 4-H Newsletter.
- Continue to support and market campaign throughout October.
- Submit news release #2 to the local media (late October, but prior to October 29th), providing information about the benefits of working smoke alarms.
- Follow through with distribution plan.
- When appropriate, submit a news release to local media, announcing the results of the collection and distribution.
- Complete "Sound the Alarm" report form and fax to Courtney Dodd.
- Additional community service idea: offer to check smoke alarm batteries in homes of the elderly.



PRESS RELEASE #1

Texas 4-H "Sounds the Alarm" With Fire Prevention Program.

Contact: (Agent Name), (County Phone #), (Agent E-Mail)

Texas 4-H, part of Texas AgriLife Extension, will begin a new statewide community service project this fall. Here's the latest information about the project:

The National Fire Prevention Association reports that home fires continue to be the number one cause of fire deaths. Inhalation of smoke and poison gasses is the leading cause of death in fires and kill long before the flames reach the victim.

Roughly half of home fire deaths result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms. Because of this, _____ County 4-H is kicking off a smoke alarm drive to help "Sound the Alarm" and prevent unnecessary deaths.

"Sound the Alarm" was started by two 4-H members in Victoria County, Texas, after they were impacted by the death of four schoolmates killed in a house fire with no smoke alarm. The 4-H members wanted to prevent such a tragedy from happening again. Texas 4-H is kicking off "Sound the Alarm" as a state-wide service campaign this fall.

To help prevent house fire deaths in this area, new smoke alarms can be donated at the _____ Fire Department or _____ County Extension Office. 4-H Members, families and community supporters will then distribute and install these smoke alarms locally to those in need.

If you have questions or are interested in receiving a "Sound the Alarm" smoke alarm, please contact the _____ County Extension Office at _____. Together we can make a difference and save lives.

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FIRE FACT:

Every home should have at least one working smoke alarm.

Buy a smoke alarm at any hardware or discount store. It's inexpensive protection for you and your family. Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home. A working smoke alarm can double your chances of survival. Test it monthly, keep it free of dust and replace the battery at least once a year. Smoke alarms themselves should be replaced after tens years of service, or as recommended by the manufacturer.

Source:
U.S. Fire Administration

PRESS RELEASE #2

Texas 4-H Community Service Project “Sounds the Alarm”

Contact: *(Agent Name)*, *(County Phone #)*, *(Agent E-Mail)*

Texas 4-H, part of Texas AgriLife Extension, will begin a new statewide community service project this fall. Here’s the latest information about the project from Extension Specialists:

Texas 4-H is “Sounding the Alarm” by collecting and installing smoke detectors to families in need, said Courtney Dodd, Extension Program Specialist for 4-H and Youth Development in Corpus Christi. The program will be kicked off as a service campaign this fall, she said.

The Environmental Protection Agency lists the two most common smoke detectors for commercial use as ionization chamber and photoelectric.

The agency advises:

- Before purchasing a smoke alarm, contact the local fire department to see what codes and/or requirements have been established for the appliance.
- Look for smoke alarms that have been tested and evaluated by agencies such as Underwriters Laboratories.
- Read instructions on the package before buying a smoke alarm and, after purchase, follow any user guide or warranty.

The New York City Fire Department, as well as fire fighters across the country, recommend smoke detectors be installed outside each bedroom or sleeping area in a house. Among the fire department’s other recommendations are:

- Installing smoke detectors on every level of the home.
- Testing smoke detectors at least once a week.
- Changing batteries in smoke detectors twice a year, when the clock changes from standard time to day light savings time, and when it changes back again. This year, the time will ‘fall back’ on Oct. 29.
- Keeping bedroom doors closed when family members are sleeping.

Janie Harris, Texas AgriLife Extension housing and environment specialist, also has some recommendations for preventing fires and fire-related deaths:

- If using extension cords, use only heavy-duty ones and never use them over their capacity; otherwise the cord could get hot, melt and start a fire.
- Use candles only in secure spots where they can’t be accidentally tipped over, or where fabric or other combustible material could accidentally reach the flame and start a fire.
- Clean the lint filter of the clothes dryer after each use.
- Do everything possible to prevent home fires, but be prepared just in case. Establish, review and practice at least two escape routes for each member of the family.

The National Fire Prevention Association reports home fires to be the number one cause of fire deaths, and most of those fires occur between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., according to the U.S. Fire Administration.

To help prevent these deaths in this area, new smoke alarms can be donated at _____ or _____ County Extension office.

“4-H members, families and community supports will then distribute and install these smoke alarms locally,” Dodd said. “Together we can make a difference and save lives.”

For more information call the _____ County Extension office at _____.

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FIRE FACT:

Caring for Children

Children under five are naturally curious about fire. Many play with matches and lighters. Tragically, children set over 20,000 house fires every year. Take the mystery out of fire play by teaching your children that fire is a tool, not a toy.

Source:
U.S. Fire Administration

NEWSLETTER INSERT

To be placed in your County 4-H, Agriculture, and Family and Consumer Science Newsletters or articles.

FIRE FACT:

Prevent Electrical Fires

Never overload circuits or extension cords. Do not place cords and wires under rugs, over nails or in high traffic areas. Immediately shut off and unplug appliances that sputter, spark or emit an unusual smell. Have them professionally repaired or replaced.

Source:
U.S. Fire Administration

_____ (4-H Club/County 4-H) is collecting new smoke alarms to be distributed locally to low income families. Research shows that home fires are the cause of most fire related deaths. Over half of these deaths result from homes not having a smoke detector installed. Please drop off all smoke alarms at the _____ Fire Station or county Extension office. Texas 4-H is making a difference in _____ County!

PROGRAM FLYER

This flyer is available in 8 1/2" X 11" pdf format on the Texas 4-H and Youth Development Website at: <http://texas4-h.tamu.edu/soundthealarm>.

FIRE FACT:

In 2002 alone, lighted tobacco products caused an estimated 14,450 residential fires, 520 civilian deaths, 1,330 injuries, and \$371 million in residential property damage.

Source:
U.S. Fire Administration/
National Fire Data Center



Help Texas 4-H save lives!

Donate new smoke alarms at:
_____ Fire Department
or County Extension Office.

Each year home fires continue to be the leading cause of fire related deaths in the United States. Half of these deaths result in homes that do not have a smoke alarm. By donating one detector, the chances of someone in that home dying in a fire related incident is reduced by 50% (NFPA).



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For questions about donating or receiving a smoke alarm, please contact:

COUNTY REPORT

FIRE FACT:

Career firefighters include full-time (career) uniformed firefighters regardless of assignments, e.g., suppression, prevention/inspection, administration. Career firefighters included here work for a public municipal fire department; they do not include career firefighters who work for state or federal government or in private fire brigades.

Volunteer firefighters include any active part-time (call or volunteer) firefighters. Active volunteers are defined as being involved in fire fighting.

Estimated number of firefighters in 2004: 1,100,750 (career: 305,150, volunteer: 795,600)

Firefighters by age group:
 16-19 (3.9%),
 20-29 (20.9%),
 30-39 (29.5%),
 40-49 (27.1%),
 50-59 (13.8%)
 60 and over (4.8%)

Seventy-three percent of career firefighters are in communities that protect a population of 25,000 or more.

Ninety-five percent of the volunteers are in departments that protect a population of 25,000 or less and more than 50% are located in small, rural departments that protect a population of 2,500 or less.

Source:
 National Fire Protection Association, U.S. Fire Department Profile Through 2004

FAX TO: Courtney Dodd
 District 11 Extension Program Specialist - 4-H

FAX NUMBER: 361-265-9434

DISTRICT: _____

COUNTY: _____

NUMBER OF SMOKE ALARMS:

Collected: _____

Distributed: _____

DONATION TOTAL: \$ _____

*Thank you for helping Texas 4-H members
 save lives through Sounding the Alarm!*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

FIRE FACT:

The United States has a severe fire problem, more so than is generally perceived. Nationally, there are millions of fires, thousands of deaths, tens of thousands of injuries, and billions of dollar loss - which makes the U.S. fire problem one of great national importance. Between 1996 and 2005, an average of 3,932 Americans lost their lives and another 20,919 were injured annually as the result of fire. These averages do not reflect the events of September 11, 2001.

Source:
National Fire Protection Association Fire Loss in the U.S. During 2005 Abridged Report.

U.S. Fire Administration
<http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/>

U. S. Fire Administration for Kids (USFA Kids)
<http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/kids/flash.shtm>

National Fire Protection Association
<http://www.nfpa.org>

FireSafety.gov
<http://www.firesafety.gov/>

Federal Emergency Management Agency
<http://www.fema.gov/>

U.S. National Library of Medicine & National Institutes of Health - Medline Plus
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/firesafety.html>