

American Red Cross

A local family had a small propane heater in their basement to keep the pipes warm, as so many families do. After work one day, the father started the heater and went upstairs to warm up dinner. Their son stated that he smelled plastic. The mother was seated very close to the basement door and smelled it as well.

They thought it was their basement coal stove until they smelled smoke. Once opening the door, thick black smoke rolled up the steps. After calling 911, the father grabbed a fire extinguisher and tried to put out the fire. Flames covered the basement from floor to ceiling. He hoped to slow it down until the firefighters arrived. Five fire companies arrived due to the propane in the house.

The family did have fire alarms in the house, but no functioning batteries in them. The bedrooms for the family's two sons are directly above where the fire was, and they stated several times how grateful they were that the fire occurred when they were home and awake. The team from the Red Cross welcomed the family into their vehicle while the fire company was putting out the fire. Our team provided financial assistance as well as simple things, such as a bottle of water. The family was supported by being placed in a hotel for a week, and during that time, the Red Cross checked to make sure they were okay multiple times.

As part of their homeschooling, they do have an escape plan, but again, did not have working smoke alarms. After the event, the couple invited the Red Cross in to place smoke alarms throughout the house. The family stated the compassion from the Red Cross during that time was incredible.