



FIRE DEPARTMENT  
Town of Chapel Hill  
403 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

phone (919) 968-2781 fax (919) 932-2956  
[www.townofchapelhill.org](http://www.townofchapelhill.org)

## FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** December 21, 2006

**ISSUED BY:** Fire Chief Dan Jones, 919-968-2783

**SUBJECT:** Habitat House saved from fire by sprinkler system  
Fire Marshal Alvin Ward, 919-969-2006

**CONTACT:** Habitat for Humanity, Bert Liverance, 919-929-3355

**CHAPEL HILL** – At 03:15 a.m. this morning, the Chapel Hill Fire Department responded to a single family residence fire at 605 Nunn Street. The initial response consisted of four apparatus and one command vehicle, with a total of thirteen personnel and one unit from Carrboro Fire Department with three personnel.

The first crew arrived within two minutes and found light smoke conditions in the house. Crews quickly found the remaining fire, which was in a pan of grease on the stove. Fire damage was limited to the area of the stove and cabinet just above the stove. This was due to the residential sprinkler system in the Habitat for Humanity home previously installed by Chapel Hill firefighters. Three sprinkler heads had activated properly and extinguished most of the fire before firefighters arrived. Firefighters worked to remove smoke and water from the home.

The Chapel Hill Firefighters Association, with assistance from Carrboro Firefighters, has installed fire sprinklers in 49 Habitat homes in Orange County. This was the first of those homes to suffer a fire. The sprinkler system certainly saved the home and quite possibly the family who lives there. Captain Tommy Gregory of the Chapel Hill Fire Department has led the effort to protect these homes with modern fire sprinkler technology. Sprinkler companies donate the materials and firefighters donate their time, tools and skills to make the installations.

The cause of the fire was unattended cooking. Damage has been initially estimated at \$3,000 for the structure and contents. There were no injuries reported to firefighters but one of the residents suffered a minor burn trying to remove the pot from the stove. Home fires at this hour of the night nearly always result in significant loss and/or destruction and can frequently result in fatalities. The fire sprinkler system saved this home and family. Captain Gregory and the firefighters who installed the system saved this home with their sprinkler work before having to respond.

Ensure a safe holiday season with properly functioning smoke detectors, a home escape plan and careful decorating. When building a new home or renovating an existing home, the Chapel Hill Fire Department encourages all homeowners to consider sprinkler systems as a life and home saving measure. Additional information on fire safety can be found at the following website: [www.usfa.fema.gov/safety](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/safety), or through the CHFD Life Safety Division.

For additional information contact: Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition – 815-464-8001 or go to [www.homefiresprinkler.org](http://www.homefiresprinkler.org).