



Red Cross responds as fire destroys Long Hill home

By Independent Press

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The Colonial Crossroads Chapter of the American Red Cross responded to a multi-family house fire in Long Hill Township in the early morning hours of Thursday, Jan. 14. The Disaster Action Team (DAT) members arrived with a two-pronged mission: to support other first responders as well as provide immediate shelter, food and basic necessities to the affected families.

"I arrived quickly since I live up the street," says Sue Pierson, DAT member. "The house at the corner of Main and Union was consumed with flames and the residents lost almost all of their belongings. We provided hot drinks and food and our disaster experts were able to counsel the residents on critical next steps."

Alex Lopez was living in one of the apartments with his wife and infant. "My wife woke me up because she heard an alarm," he stated. "We think it was the smoke detector from the store on the ground level. I could smell smoke and quickly went up to the third floor to my mother's apartment. When she didn't answer the door, I ran down and got my key and let myself in. The smoke was already shoulder high and above her face."

Alex was able to get his mother, Irene Hernandez, and his wife and child safely out of the building.

"Our ability to respond to this multi-family fire in Stirling is a perfect example of why a highly-trained, ready-to-respond Disaster Action Team is essential," says Barb Chestnut Flynn, emergency services director for the Colonial Crossroads Chapter. "The families in this home were forced outside in freezing weather and were extremely grateful to be able to have skilled professionals provide them with immediate support."

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FIRE'S AFTERMATH — Irene Hernandez, left, who was saved by her son Alex Lopez, far right, thanks Red Cross Disaster Action Team members Irene Sacks of Gillette and Dick Ash of New Providence.