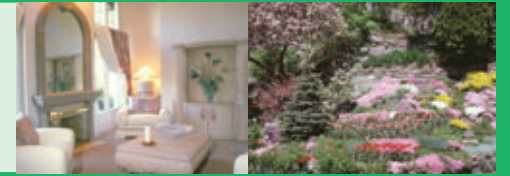




# HOME & GARDEN



October 24, 2011

## Be Aware of Home Heating System Safety and Fire Hazards

October is National Fire Safety Month and heading into winter means an increase in residential fires according to the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA). The USFA cites home space heating as the second leading cause of residential fires during the winter season. According to a 2009 USFA report, 50,200 fires, 160 deaths, 550 injuries and \$301,300,000 in damage were the result of residential heating fires.

**Proper maintenance** of heating systems can help reduce the safety and fire hazards.

Dave Knight, of Thornton & Grooms states, "When it comes to your heating system, we can't stress enough the importance of regular maintenance. To operate safely, heating systems need to be annually inspected including being cleaned and tuned-up by a professional."

Knight goes on to say, "During an annual check-up the safety switches on your furnace are tested and the combustion is checked. Also, if your furnace has a pilot light, it's extremely important to make sure there aren't any leaks in the heat exchanger. Leaks in the heat exchanger can allow combustion products like carbon monoxide into your home, creating a serious safety concern."

**"Carbon Monoxide poisoning** is known as the 'silent killer,' because you cannot see it, smell it or taste it, but it claims nearly 300 lives each year," according to the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC).

Knight states, "If you have an electric heating system, like a heat pump, it needs to be checked annually as well. Running electric heat puts an enormous load on your electrical circuits. The heating up and cooling down of the wires can lead to expansion and can loosen connections. A loose connection can lead to higher amperage and can burn wires. During a tune-up, all of the connections are checked to make sure they are tight. Also, safety switches and relay points are checked to ensure the system is operating properly."

**"Smoke detector** preventive maintenance is another way to keep your family safe. If you haven't done so already this year, change the batteries in all of your homes' smoke detectors," says Knight. According to the CPSC smoke detectors should be tested every month and batteries changed once a year.

"The investment in regular heating system maintenance is well worth the money. Even if there is nothing wrong with your system, you can sleep better at night with the peace of mind of knowing everything is in good shape," says Knight.

## Community Housing Network Raises \$68,000 at Annual Event

*Funds will help people with disabilities find affordable housing*

Troy, MI – Metro Detroit nonprofit Community Housing Network (CHN) raised nearly \$68,000 at its 11th annual fundraiser, "Raise the Roof for Affordable Housing," held October 6 at the Royal Park Hotel in Rochester. Money raised from the event will help people with disabilities and those who are homeless find long-term, successful housing.

**A record number of people, 330,** attended the event. Guests enjoyed networking with cocktails, silent and live auctions, and a sit-down dinner. During the evening program the first Emmett Jones Memorial Award was presented to CHN program participant Howard Powell, who has made significant strides in reaching his goals after being homeless for several years. Mr. Powell now has an apartment through CHN's Leasing Assistance Program, a supportive housing program. Emmett Jones, who passed away in 2010, was a well-liked employee at CHN whose

passion was to help people who were chronically homeless.

Another highlight of the evening was the Adopt A Family auction,

where attendees placed bids to donate to CHN's seasonal program that provides individuals and families with gifts and basic necessities during



**Dan Ross of O'Brien Construction, a sponsor of the event, and Kyle Westberg of West Construction, enjoyed the evening at Raise the Roof at the Royal Park Hotel in Rochester.**

the holidays. Maplewood Development provided an incentive of \$2,500 to help donors reach a goal of \$10,000. The final amount raised was \$18,100, a record amount for the program.

"We were very pleased with the outcome of the event," said Community Housing Network president Marc Craig. "Through the generosity of our supporters, we were able to raise significant funding for our programs to help people with disabilities find long-term housing. A lack of affordable housing, especially for people with disabilities, remains an enormous challenge in our communities. I'd like to thank everyone who attended for their efforts in raising financial support and awareness for this important issue. We were also amazed at the generosity of our guests for their contributions to our Adopt A Family program."

The event saw a record number of sponsors this year as well, including Leadership Sponsor Attorneys Title Agency and President's Circle Sponsors Flagstar Bank and O'Brien Construction. Additional sponsors included Fifth Third Bank, Maplewood Development, MSHDA, Palmer Pointe Development Team, Perfect Floors, Inc., St. James Capital and others.

**Community Housing Network** is a nonprofit organization committed to providing homes for people in need through proven strategies of homelessness prevention, housing assistance and development, community education and referral, advocacy and additional services. The organization carries out its work in metro Detroit. For more information, visit <http://www.communityhousingnetwork.org>.



**Johnna Locricchio, 2010 Adopt A Family program participant who told her story at the event; and Carrie Alexander, 2010 Adopt A Family program coordinator for Troy-based Community Housing Network**

## "The Hits Just Keep Coming" to Meadow Brook

The Meadow Brook Hall Garden Club will meet Friday, October 28, 2011, in the Coach House adjacent to Meadow Brook Hall on the estate grounds at 480 South Adams Road, Rochester MI 48309-1904. Coffee and refreshments will be served at 9:15 a.m. with program to follow at 10:00 a.m. including guest speaker Sue Grubba, Creative Scapes; Master Gardener. She will be speaking about

the new plant varieties on the market and how they are performing in Metro Detroit area gardens.

**Guests are welcome.** There is a \$5 non-member donation. Reservations are not required. Membership fee is \$30.00 per year, or \$45.00 per couple. For more information, contact 248-364-6210, or MBHGCMembers@gmail.com, or visit [www.meadowbrookhall.org](http://www.meadowbrookhall.org).

## Safety First on Halloween

Just because Halloween celebrates all things scary doesn't mean you want any safety scares of your own this year. Use these tips from USA.gov to make sure you and your family have a fun and safe holiday.

**Pick visible costumes.** When you're costume shopping, encourage your kids to pick brightly colored costumes. That way it will be easier for cars to see them on dark roads. If they insist on wearing dark colors, stick some reflective tape on the costumes to help them be more noticeable. You can also put reflective tape on their candy bags and give your children flashlights to carry.

Use face paint instead of a mask with your children's costumes. Face paint may work better than a mask when it comes to visibility. If you decide to paint designs on your kids' faces, follow the directions on the face paint packaging closely. You may want to test the face paint a few days before Halloween to make sure it doesn't irri-

tate your children's skin. And make sure to avoid their eyes when you apply it.

**Don't snack while trick-or-treating.** Wait until you get home so that you have a chance to inspect your children's candy. To prevent snacking, give your kids a small meal before they head out. When they get home, toss out any candy with opened or damaged wrappers and homemade treats, unless you know the giver personally.

Consider using a glow stick or battery-powered lights instead of candles in luminaries or in jack-o-lanterns, especially around little kids who could get burned or drapery that could catch fire. Make sure your kids Halloween costumes are flame resistant in case a cape or other part of the costume comes near an open flame.

**You can find more tips** for having a safe and fun Halloween on USA.gov's Halloween page.