



December 3, 2015

For more information, contact:

David Cramton, Lieutenant
Three Rivers Fire Department
DCramton@threeriversmi.org
(269) 278-3755

Kylie O'Brien
University of Michigan Health System
Department of Communication
kylieo@med.umich.edu
(734) 764-2220

For immediate release

Three Rivers Fire Department wins safety award for fire prevention efforts

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — The University of Michigan Trauma Burn Center announces the Three Rivers Fire Department as the winner of the 2015 Leland Gayheart Fire Safety and Prevention Award for the department's Fire Prevention for Schools program.

Each year, the U-M Trauma Burn Center supports the work of Michigan firefighters by presenting a fire safety prevention award in honor of Leland Gayheart. Gayheart was a 23-year-old firefighter who lost his life to a devastating burn injury in 1991.

The award, a joint effort between the Gayheart family and U-M Trauma Burn Center, includes a \$500 honorarium and was created as a tribute to Gayheart, and to encourage fire prevention programs within local fire departments. It's presented annually to a fire department whose innovative efforts have demonstrated a statewide, countywide, or citywide impact on fire safety and prevention.

"We are honored to receive this award," says Three Rivers Fire Department Lieutenant Dave Cramton. "It's a reflection of the hard work our department members put in, as well as the positive relationships we have formed with ServPro and Three Rivers Community Schools."

The Three Rivers Fire Department takes pride in its Fire Prevention for Schools program and its ability to reach over 800 children throughout the Three Rivers area. The department provides 45 minutes of interactive learning to each student, including how to recognize and react to smoke alarm activation, how to crawl below smoke and understanding the importance of a designated family meeting place.

“This program is a wonderful example of fire departments partnering with area businesses and agencies to tremendously improve the safety of the people in their community,” says Karla Klas, managing director of injury prevention and community outreach at the U-M Trauma Burn Center. “We applaud Three Rivers’ prevention efforts and are proud to present them with the 2015 Gayheart Award.”

Through a partnership with ServPro of Cass and St. Joseph Counties, Three Rivers Fire Department has also provided over 600 smoke alarms to local residents and promoted fire education, and safety in the home.

“Fire Prevention is very important to us,” says Steve Meyer, operations manager for ServPro of Cass and St. Joseph Counties. “Donating smoke detectors is our opportunity to help protect our local community. We can restore homes, but we can’t save lives once it’s too late.”

The Gayheart Award has a special place in the heart of Three Rivers Fire Department Chief Carl Holcomb. He started his fire service career in the late 1980s at Orion Township Fire Department where he met Gayheart and the two quickly became friends.

“Lee and I always seemed to be involved in something around the fire station and subsequently found we had many of the same interests,” Holcomb says. “We shared a love of the outdoors as well as a love for the fire service.”

“His accident left huge holes in so many lives, including our fire department. The fire service lost a kind soul that day,” he adds.

Cramton says the department will use the prize money to purchase additional fire safety and prevention materials.

About the U-M Trauma Burn Center

The U-M Trauma Burn Center is an internationally recognized leader in patient care, research and rehabilitation, and is verified as both a Burn Center and a Level-1 Trauma Center. Its programs address preventable injuries to children, adolescents and adults, as well as the medical and social consequences of injury and disability. The U-M Trauma Burn Center is committed to community education on prevention, consequences and treatment of traumatic injury.

For additional information

University of Michigan Trauma Burn Center:

<http://www.traumaburn.org/>

The Leland Gayheart Fire Safety and Prevention Award, and past winners:

<http://www.traumaburn.org/prevention/leland.shtml>

Three Rivers Fire Department:

<http://www.threeriversmi.org/city-departments/fire-department>

<http://www.facebook.com/CityofThreeRiversFireDepartment>

Photo caption

Three Rivers Fire Department receives the 2015 Leland Gayheart Fire Safety and Prevention Award from the University of Michigan Trauma Burn Center for its work at Three Rivers Community Schools, as well as its partnership with ServPro of Cass and St. Joseph Counties. Accepting the award are (L to R) Steve

Meyer, operations manager of ServPro of Cass and St. Joseph Counties, Tony Blodgett, owner of ServPro of Cass and St. Joseph Counties, and Three Rivers Fire Department Lieutenant Dave Cramton.