



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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New Non-Profit Educates Children and Families About Dangers of House Fires and What To Do Before "Stop, Drop & Roll"

Austin's Fire Chiefs, Inc. Created By Local Mom in Honor of Nine-Year-Old Austin, Who Perished in a House Fire

Hollywood, FL – March 18, 2019 – Elena Belden, a local Hollywood mother, has established a new non-profit corporation dedicated to teaching children and families what to do in the event of a house fire. She created the organization, Austin's Fire Chiefs, Inc. (AFC), in the name of her son who perished in a house fire.

"Most kids know 'stop, drop & roll' but we haven't taught them what comes BEFORE that, and that is where we believe there's an enormous opportunity to educate people and save lives," said Belden.

AFC's 45-minute, interactive and fun presentation explains what to do in the event of a house fire and the organization also provides a free smoke alarm to people in need. Belden and her team have already presented the program to approximately 2,500 children in the tri-county area. It teaches many things, including:

- How to check smoke alarms
- What to do if you hear an alarm or somehow learn there is a fire emergency
- Identifying two exits from each room
- The importance of emergency ladders in homes that are more than one story
- Creating a family meeting place
- How to safely escape if there is a fire emergency

"I took my four-year-old brother to one of these presentations and hours later, he said to his mom, 'the woman had a child that died from a fire because he had gone back inside – you never, ever go back after a fire'," said one attendee. "I was sure that this mission would make a difference, but hearing it from the mouth of a four-year-old made it real and so necessary."

"It became clear early on that 'stop, drop & roll' is really not the first step in fire safety. If there was a fire in our house, my son would not know what to do," said another parent. "He and the other kids were engaged in the presentation and learned the importance of having a plan. But it is truly was a wake-up call for the parents in the room. Hearing that our kids not have a plan in case of a fire was eye opening. We left the presentation and committed to practicing at home. Our son learned how to open every window and door in house as well as the safe places outside of the house. We now have a plan. I sleep better at night knowing that he understands that grabbing that special toy is not a priority and that it can be replaced. The plan is to get out to safety. I highly recommend the AFC program to every parent."

About Austin's Fire Chiefs, Inc.

Austin's Fire Chiefs, Inc. is a Florida non-profit corporation, currently serving the South Florida area. Please contact the founder, Elena Belden, to donate, schedule presentations or to request a smoke alarm. Learn more at www.austinsplan.org.

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