***Sample Letter to the Editor – Response to Tragedy***

*Use the letter to the editor below for submission to your local newspaper. Add your name as the author and send it to your local newspaper. You’ll be helping residents of your community learn what they can do to make their home safer from fire.*

**(MONTH, DATE, YEAR)**

Letters to the Editor

**(NEWSPAPER)**

**(ADDRESS)**

**(CITY, STATE, ZIP, POSTAL CODE)**

To the Editor:

The recent fire in **(TOWN/CITY)** has saddened the community and left many residents wondering how it could have been prevented. The fire occurred in a multigenerational home. Tragically, we lost **(ADD NUMBER)** members of a family. **(OR TRAGICALLY, (ADD NUMBER) MEMBERS OF A FAMILY WERE INJURED.) (OR TRAGICALLY, THE JOHN DOE FAMILY LOST THEIR HOME AND ALL BELONGINGS.)** Multigenerational households are on the rise. The number of Americans living under the same roof with at least three generations has doubled since 1980 and it’s not uncommon for three and four generations to share a home.

According to the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) data, on average, seven people die in home fires each day. U.S. fire departments respond to roughly 360,000 fires each year. Home fires kill roughly 2,500 people per year.

**(YOUR FIRE DEPARTMENT)**, NFPA and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) want to turn the collective sadness experienced in our community into a call to action. We are urging all residents to take preventive measures to reduce the risk of a fire in their home and tragedy due to fire.

* Make sure your home has working smoke alarms. You need a smoke alarm on every level, inside each sleeping room, and outside each separate sleeping area. Interconnect the alarms so when one sounds, they all sound.
* Test your alarms at least once a month. Press each test button to make sure it is working.
* Everyone should know the sound of the smoke alarm. Make sure family members can hear the smoke alarm during the day and at night.
* Smoke alarms may not wake up children. Older adults may not hear the smoke alarm. Assign someone to help children, older adults and people with disabilities escape.
* Install smoke alarms and alert devices to help family members who are deaf or hard of hearing. Alert devices, such as strobe lights, flash when the smoke alarm sounds. Pillow or bed shakers may be useful to wake a person who is sleeping. The shakers are triggered by the sound of the smoke alarm and shake people awake to warn them of a fire. Assign someone to help them escape.
* Plan your home escape. Share the plan with everyone in the family and guests.
* The plan should include two ways out of every room and an outside family meeting place.
* Remove clutter to prevent trips and falls and allow for a quick escape.
* Install handrails along the full length of both sides of the stairs.
* If there is a fire, get outside quickly and stay outside. Then call 9-1-1.
* If you can’t get outside, call 9-1-1. Let the fire department know you can’t get outside. Wave a light-colored cloth or a flashlight form the window.

For more fire safety information, visit nfpa.org/public-education, cpsc.gov/safety-education or **(YOUR LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENT WEB SITE)**.

Our community has suffered a great loss. By practicing home fire safety, we will band together to prevent future tragedy.

**(YOUR NAME, TITLE)**