

School Age Programs

The Philadelphia Fire Department offers a variety of programs and contests during the school year specifically designed to heighten awareness of fire and burn safety among the school-aged children in Philadelphia. While gang, drug, and gun issues continue to hold center stage on television news programs, children are still most at risk from fire and burns in their homes. Our programs are targeted specifically to age-appropriate issues. Most have been around for years and there is no fee for our services. Our hope is that Educators will take advantage of them. Some are...

- **Elementary School Assembly Programs.** These assemblies are forty-five minutes long and are targeted to grades kindergarten (K) to 2nd grade, 3rd to 6th grade, and 7th and 8th grades. With smaller schools, we generally do only two assemblies, K to 4th and 5th to 8th grades. Each assembly message builds on the last. Each emphasizes particular fire problems incurred by a particular age group, such as dangerous match play by 5-to-7 year olds, home fire safety by the 4th to 6th graders, and responsibility for their family and community for 7th and 8th grade pupils. The assembly includes a variety of fire safety videos, which help to enforce the safety message.
- **Junior Fire Patrols** are composed of up to twenty students from 3rd through 8th grades. Sponsored by a responsible adult, the Junior Fire Patrol's job is to assist the Fire Department in raising awareness and safety in their homes, schools, and communities through poster displays or projects that survey their school or home for fire safety. They support programs like "Change Your Clock, Change Your Battery" or "Make Tuesday Test Day". The Patrol compiles a photo-journal of their efforts and submits the finished book to the Fire Prevention Division in the Spring for a judging with the best book winning a luncheon for the sponsor and the patrol members.
- **Speakers** are available to come to high school health classes to talk about the chemistry of fire, careers in fire fighting, and how to begin to think about fire safety for future parents. The most at-risk group for fire fatalities is children under six years old. Many of these deaths and injuries could be prevented. Smoke alarms, properly placed and tested, combined with responsible adults with a home escape plan could save a lot of needless deaths and injuries. The plan should spell out the responsibilities for the care of infants and toddlers. If students understand a little bit about fire growth and potential, the seed for our future families planning is sewn.
- The annual **City-Wide Essay Contest** is held during the month of October. Encompassing 6th, 7th and 8th grades, the contest asks for an

essay of 250 words or less about residential fire safety. Generously sponsored by St. Joseph's University, first prize is \$200.00 and a trophy with second and third place winning \$150.00 and \$100.00 dollars respectively. The winning school holds a perpetual trophy for one year.

- The **CAPA and Citywide Poster Contest** is open to all High School Students in Philadelphia. Posters are created by high schoolers around basic fire prevention themes and are judged by art teachers from around the area. Prizes include money and gift certificates for art supplies at Taws Art Supply Company in Center City.
- In the Spring, we have the “**B.A.F.F.Y.**” **Bunny Easter** drawing for children 5-to-12 years old. Open to all children in the City, it's an entry composed of a crossword puzzle or “seek and find”. They are available at individual firehouses and the winning entry receives a \$200.00 US savings bond.
- **Juvenile Fire Stoppers** is a program designed to help children who play with matches or who experience problems with the misuse of matches or cigarette lighters. Firefighters visit children at their homes to discuss and educate them in the proper use of fire and the tools adults use to cook or smoke. Some children come to us through the court system as arsonists, and we do our best to help them. We can also deal with children who pull false alarms. It's a program that can identify larger mental health problems in some kids and start to get them proper help.
- For eight weeks in the summer, we run the **Fire Safety Day Camp**. It is an all day program co-administered by the Department of Recreation. Children 6-to-12 years old come to the Fire Training Academy with summer day camp groups from playgrounds across the City. They experience an anti-drug and gang workshop with a Philadelphia Police Department G.R.E.A.T. OFFICER and some hands-on fire safety training by running an obstacle course designed to emulate a fire in their home. It may be the only chance some children have to practice an escape plan.

Each of these programs reinforce the good lessons of fire prevention, safety, and the responsibility of community. They are available to each and every school in Philadelphia at no cost. Please invite us in !