



# Gwinnett County Government Communications Division NEWS RELEASE

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## **GWINNETT FIRE SELECTED TO IMPLEMENT SCHOOL-BASED FIRE SAFETY PROGRAM**

(Lawrenceville, Ga., Dec. 2, 2015) – Commissioners agreed Tuesday to accept funding from the Michigan Public Health Institute for the Department of Fire and Emergency Services to participate in *Sound Off with the Home Safety Patrol*. The program focuses on providing second and third graders with detailed instruction on fire safety and the importance of working smoke alarms in the home. A Department of Homeland Security-Federal Emergency Management Agency grant made the funds available.

Gwinnett was selected as one of two sites for the program because of the robust smoke alarm and home safety visit programs the department already has in place. The department will receive a \$10,000 stipend to use for smoke alarms, educational materials, promotional items, and incentives for student participation.

“We are excited to work with the MPHI and Gwinnett County Public Schools to promote fire safety and to advocate for working smoke alarms in at-risk homes,” Gwinnett Fire Chief Casey Snyder said. Department representatives plan to meet with leaders at Chesney Elementary in Norcross and Patrick Elementary in Buford about the program. Both schools are named for fallen Gwinnett firefighters who dedicated their lives to fire safety and education advocacy.

Students will learn about smoke alarms and fire safety through classroom visits from firefighters. They will also participate in activities that encourage families to work together to count and test smoke alarms at home and report the findings in class. Parents and caregivers will have the opportunity to request a visit by firefighters if their home lacks working smoke alarms.

Fire Marshal Stephen Hrustich said, “Our goal is to use *Sound Off* to get working smoke alarms in at least 250 at-risk homes that currently lack that protection. The key is to engage these children to be active participants in their own safety, a lesson that will serve them and their families for life.”

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