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## MOFD honored by Bay Area Red Cross

By Nick Marnell



MOFD's Kathy Leonard and Dennis Rein Photo courtesy MOFD

With all of the media coverage of the potential for wildfires, at least one organization wants to remind residents that fires can also ignite inside the home, and urges preparation on that level as well.

The American Red Cross recognized the Moraga-Orinda Fire District for its efforts in educating the public about home fire safety as the organization kicked off its Sound the Alarm campaign, which will attempt to install smoke alarms for those who cannot afford them or are physically unable to install them. Fire Marshal Kathy Leonard and Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Dennis Rein accepted the award for the district.

"We wanted to honor the nine Contra Costa County fire districts for what they do - including little things like educating the public on the installation of fire alarms," said Bay Area Red Cross board member Briana Taylor.

"We have had two fire fatalities in the last two years and neither home had a functioning fire alarm," Leonard said.

"It's super important to have a working fire alarm for the early detection of a fire - especially with how fast interior fires burn."

Taylor bemoaned the fact that it sometimes takes major news stories to remind people of the importance of fire prevention. "It's when tragedies like these happen that people will install an alarm," she said. "A fire alarm saved the life of a man in Santa Rosa. It woke him up and he was able to escape his burning mobile home."

And that prompted Taylor to also stress the importance of creating a fire escape plan. "A smoke alarm is great, but you've got to be able to get out," she said.

To qualify for a free smoke alarm, sign up at the American Red Cross website to request a visit from the Home Fire Preparedness team, who will provide fire safety information and free smoke alarms. "Call us and we'll come out and put them in," Taylor said.

Reach the reporter at: [nick@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:nick@lamorindaweekly.com)

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