



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Albright College Sophomore Dies in Early Morning Fire

Newburyport, Massachusetts - September 15, 2014. ... The Albright College campus community, in Reading, Pennsylvania, is mourning the loss of a student, who died in an off campus house fire, early Saturday morning, September 13, 2014. The fire claimed the life of Matt Rein, a 19 year old sophomore environmental science major and record holding swim team member from South River, New Jersey. Two other students, unnamed at this time, were injured during this fire. The fire, which occurred in the basement of the home, caused smoke to fill the structure and, although the building had working smoke alarms according to fire officials, forced four students to jump from a second floor balcony.

Three additional students were found in the home by fire crews; one on the first floor, while another student was found in a second floor bedroom; Rein was found at the top of the basement stairs. All injured parties were transported to Reading Hospital by emergency medical services. One of these students was subsequently transported to Lehigh Valley Hospital, near Allentown, PA, after being stabilized at Reading. Of the three students found inside of the home, it is expected that the two unnamed male students will survive.

The fire occurred around 5:00 AM at 1321 North 13th Street. The damage is currently estimated to be \$20,000.00. It appears as if the fire was suppressed, in part, by a water pipe that ruptured, containing the fire to the basement of the structure. While the fire is still under investigation, it is believed to be attributed to accidental causes. Reading Police and Fire Departments, as well as the Pennsylvania State Police Fire Marshal's office, are still investigating this fire. Ironically, the College Heights Community Council had scheduled a meeting with campus administrators to address off campus student housing in the area south of campus. This meeting was scheduled for Sunday night, September 14th.



While there is a limit of three students living in an apartment at one time, there were seven occupants in the home at the time of the fire. These ordinances are often circumvented by students, who bring others into an apartment to decrease the cost of living, without notifying the landlord. Rein was visiting members of the swim team at the time of the fire and was not living in the home in a full time capacity. Counseling services and the school chaplain are available to the Albright College campus community.

CCFS reflects on this tragedy and also wants to remind everyone of the **importance of properly installing and maintaining smoke detectors and other fire prevention equipment**, in accordance with prescribed codes and standards. But let's look beyond requirements and ask ourselves what else we can do to avoid potential loss of life from fire.

- Keep a **portable fire extinguisher** on every floor - and be sure it is fully charged. A fire extinguisher is useful for fires smaller than a wastebasket. **Before using a fire extinguisher call 9-1-1 and sound the fire alarm.** If a small incipient fire cannot be controlled, or if it becomes larger than a wastebasket, exit the building immediately.
- Plan your **escape routes** - Identify windows, and doors, know two ways out and determine an escape route **before the fire.**
- Keep an **emergency escape ladder** on upper floors - plan a safe escape route for windows.
- Keep **escape routes clear** - do not allow objects to be stored in halls or stairwells.
- **Inspect the exterior door** at bottom of stairwell. It must be able to be opened without a key from the inside. **Door cannot be blocked** by snow, cars or other objects.
- **Choose a meeting place in advance** - Pick a highly visible area, a safe distance away from the flames, to meet in case of fire related emergency.
- **Be prepared** - Practice your emergency exit routes with each occupant. Practice crawling low to avoid toxic smoke from a fire. Practice feeling doors for heat before opening doors. Practice opening windows and using an emergency escape ladder.



“The Center for Campus Fire Safety also wants to point out the necessity of fire sprinkler systems”, said Paul D. Martin, President of The Center for Campus Fire Safety. “To have residence halls without fire sprinklers today should be unacceptable to parents” said Martin. Fire Sprinklers protect people and structures. Most people don't realize that 8 out of 10 fire deaths occur at night when everyone is asleep. Fires are also fast; they can go from a tiny flame to total destruction in as little as three minutes. Fire sprinklers can suppress and often extinguish a fire before the fire department arrives, providing additional time to escape.

88 fatal fires have been documented that occurred on a college campus, in Greek housing or in off-campus housing within 3-miles of the campus - claiming a total of 125 victims.

- 75 fires have occurred in off-campus housing claiming 106 victims
- 7 fires have occurred in on-campus building or residence halls claiming 9 victims
- 6 fires have occurred in Greek housing claiming 10 victims

CCFS has been documenting specific campus related fires deaths since Year 2000. Current and more detailed statistics, along with the definition of how we define “campus related fires” are always posted on the website, along with a host of fire safety resources and tips for fire safety professionals as well as students in both universities and off-campus housing. One of the resources includes a daily and ongoing listing of other fire incidents in the higher education arena.

To learn more about CCFS and its programs, visit www.campusfiresafety.org.

For additional information:

Fire Fatality Statistics and Definition:

<http://www.campusfiresafety.org/firefatalitystatistics>

Continual e-news -campus fire & safety:

<http://www.campusfiresafety.org/News>

Campus Fire Safety Resources: <http://www.campusfiresafety.org/resources>



About The Center for Campus Fire Safety (CCFS)

The Center for Campus Fire Safety (CCFS) is a non-profit, member focused organization devoted to reducing the loss of life from fire at our nation's campuses. The mission of The Center for Campus Fire Safety is to serve as an advocate for the promotion of campus fire safety. CCFS serves as the focal point for the efforts of a number of organizations and also as a clearinghouse for information relating to campus fire safety. Visit us at www.campusfiresafety.org for more information.

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