Hannahville Indian Community, Michigan
Carbon Monoxide Detector Project Saves Lives

By Sherry Valiquette, CHR

In February 2003 I was asked if there was a need for prevention items for our homes in the community. Hannahville had received funds for an Injury Prevention project from the Bemidji Area Indian Health Service. Prevention being my job, I felt that we should order carbon monoxide detectors and fire escape ladders for our two story houses. We ordered 40 Kidde Carbon Monoxide/Smoke Detectors and 15 fire escape ladders. Ordering was the easy part! The hard part was installing these safety items in the homes. I started on one end of Hannahville road and worked my way down the road trying to target the elder homes first. While I was installing the detectors in one of the homes I thought to myself, "If this saves even one family in the community, then this has been worth all my hard work as well as wet feet from walking through the slush, standing on kitchen chairs, and the hauling of the installation gear."

Sherry Installing a Detector

Vernon and Marie Thunder and Sherry

The Hard Work Pays Off. On January 2005, at 4:00 am, Marie Thunder and her son, Vernon, were awakened by the alarm from one of these detectors. They called 911 and were immediately evacuated from their home. They were not able to return home for two days and required a new furnace in order to fix the carbon monoxide problem. The Tribe feels these detectors are an important safety feature that should be made available to all of the homes in the community. They are having the Hannahville Housing Department order carbon monoxide detectors for all of the homes in Hannahville with the hopes that every home will have a detector soon.

"Two lives were saved due to the Community's continued dedication to Injury Prevention. Ms. Thunder and her son's awareness and their quick emergency response during the alarms helped save their lives"

For more information about the IHS Injury Prevention Program

visit http://www.ihs.gov/MedicalPrograms/InjuryPrevention/index.cfm