



Northwest Regional Police Department

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Samuel H. Gatchell III - Chief of Police

News Release

Date: January 20, 2012

On Friday, 20 January 2012, at 3:47 AM, Officer Charles A. Tobias of the Northwest Lancaster County Regional Police was dispatched on a 911 call to 990 Schwanger Road in Mount Joy Township for a report of smoke coming from the residence. When Off. Tobias arrived at the residence on Schwanger Rd., the smoke was so thick he had difficulty finding the front of the residence. After falling over shrubbery, he was able to find the door. He started pounding on the door and windows in an attempt to alert any occupants in the residence. Eventually he was successful in waking one of the residents, Samuel Hoffman. Mr. Hoffman came to the door disoriented. Officer Tobias had to prevent Mr. Hoffman from going back inside. After getting Mr. Hoffman out of the residence, Officer Tobias was successful in alerting two additional adult occupants escorting them through the smoke and out of the residence.

Officer Tobias is quick to credit a neighbor, Michael Gary, with saving the lives of the Hoffman family. Mr. Gary had opened his door to leave his dog out and smelled smoke. On checking further, he saw the thick smoke coming from the residence across the street at 990 Schwanger Road. Mr. Gary ran to the house and made an attempt to alert the residents. Upon being unable to awake anyone and starting to see flames coming out of the house, he ran back to his house and called 911.

Officer Tobias was reluctant to take any credit for helping to save the occupants. He said he was only doing his job. He gave all the credit to Mr. Gary for his efforts and calling 911. Off. Tobias feels if it was not for Mr. Gary taking prompt action, he would not have been in a position to rescue the family. He said the rescue was a team effort with everyone doing their part.

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