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For immediate release

Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department wins safety award for special needs outreach efforts

The University of Michigan Trauma Burn Center has selected the Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department as the winner of the 2011 Leland Gayheart Fire Safety and Prevention Award for its outreach to individuals with hearing, sight, and mobility impairments.

An official presentation will take place on Tuesday, November 22 at 9:45 a.m. at the Grand Traverse Metro Fire offices, 897 Parsons Road in Traverse City, (media are invited to attend).

Along with providing specialized fire safety education to individuals with disabilities and special needs, first responders received additional training to help them communicate with people who have hearing loss. The Grand Traverse department also helped to install specialized fire safety equipment in the homes of people with disabilities.

Since the project began in 2009, about 640 individuals have been helped.

“The project is particularly outstanding because it provides life-saving education and equipment for individuals who otherwise may not receive it,” said Karla Klas, Injury Prevention Education Specialist at the U-M Trauma Burn Center. “In these tough times, the Grand Traverse Fire Department not only took the initiative to train their own first responders on this specialized communication, but they also made resources available for other departments to duplicate this essential program.”

Meredith Hawes, Fire and Life Safety Public Educator for the Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department, said they will use the \$500 prize to assist with the cost of materials for upcoming outreach classes scheduled for first responders in the Grand Traverse area.

Each year, the Trauma Burn Center supports the work of Michigan fire fighters by presenting a fire safety prevention award in honor of the Leland Gayheart, a 23-year-old firefighter who lost his life due to a devastating burn injury in 1991. The award was created as a tribute to encourage prevention programs within local fire departments. An honorarium is awarded annually to the fire department whose innovative efforts have demonstrated a statewide,

countywide, or citywide impact on prevention and fire safety. This award is presented in joint effort by the Gayheart family and the University of Michigan Trauma Burn Center.

About the U-M Trauma Burn Center

The U-M Trauma Burn Center is an internationally recognized leader in patient care, research and rehabilitation. The center is verified as both a Burn Center and a Level-1 Trauma Center. Its programs address preventable injuries to children, adolescents and adults as well as the medical and social consequences of injury and disability. The Trauma Burn Center is committed to community education on prevention, consequences and treatment of traumatic injury.

More Information:

University of Michigan Trauma Burn Center:

<http://www.traumaburn.org/>

The Leland Gayheart Fire Safety & Prevention Award and past winners:

<http://www.traumaburn.org/prevention/leland.shtml>

The Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department:

<http://www.gtmetrofire.org/>

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