



City of Maple Ridge News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 23, 2015 #15-13

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Sunrise Apartment Fire Update

Maple Ridge, BC: On Saturday, March 21, 2015 at approximately 6:00 am the Maple Ridge Fire Department responded to a fire between 222 and 223 Streets and 122 Avenue at the Sunrise Apartments. A full deployment of paid-on-call firefighters took place and mutual aid from the Pitt Meadows Fire Department was called in to deal with the blaze. Fortunately, all the residents have been accounted for and there were no casualties. A harrowing rescue of one of the building residents from the third floor was captured on news coverage and as viewers could plainly see, the skill and bravery of the firefighters on scene averted the loss of life in that situation.

“Many citizens expressed their desire to help even as the Fire Department was working to extinguish the blaze. This outpouring of support was heartwarming and an inspiration to the first responders and ESS team,” said Mayor Nicole Read. “On behalf of Council I would like to take the opportunity to thank the first responders in our community for their fast actions. Police and BC Ambulance Service personnel were on hand to assist the Maple Ridge Fire Department who worked with great skill to extinguish the blaze. It appears that all residents are accounted for and it appears no life was lost. Now that the fire is out and we are getting a handle on the impact to the residents, we are in a better position to focus the generosity of the community to help these families out.”

The Maple Ridge Fire Department is working with residents to provide access to the safe areas of the building so that they can retrieve their possessions. The fire and water damage are extensive, and the building will not be habitable for some time. The City of Maple Ridge Emergency Support Services (ESS) team was activated and provided short term shelter and aid for many of the displaced residents of the building. Many were able to find temporary accommodation with friends and neighbours in the community.

On the weekend a Facebook page called ‘Sunrise Apartment Fire Donations and Support’ was established by community volunteers. If you have items available for donation you can become part of this page and post a list and photos of the items you have to offer. Please understand that many of the residents of the Sunrise Apartments will be attempting to locate a new permanent residence and it may take several days or a few weeks for them to secure permanent housing and a place to put these donations. We have provided the (www.facebook.com/groups/373872869483303/) address to the affected families so they can connect with donors via that page.

The most important thing that citizens can do is donate cash, as the people impacted by this fire, many who do not have insurance, will need to have funds to ensure that they can relocate and replace items that may not be donated. The Maple Ridge Christian Reform Church has stepped forward and set up a bank account at Westminster Savings and you can make donations to the

Sunrise Apartment Fire fund to aid your neighbours. The Church will administer the funds to help ensure that the residents of the Sunrise Apartments get back on their feet as quickly as possible.

All of the residents' pets have been accounted for and are being sheltered or have been reunited with their owners. If people require additional assistance they are being encouraged to make contact with the Facebook page administrators.

Thank you too to the volunteers who are part of the Emergency Social Services team. They answered the early morning call and quickly set up a reception centre at the Greg Moore Youth Centre to provide the residents with a warm place to stay, meals and assistance in moving from disaster mode into recovery mode.

If you would like to become part of the Emergency Social Services (ESS) team you can find more information on the City website at mapleridge.ca under the Volunteer section www.mapleridge.ca/495/Volunteering-Opportunities.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the ESS Director by email at emergencyprogram@mapleridge.ca or by phone 604-467-7301.