



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Leroy Comrie

Fire Prevention Workshop Offers Tips, Free Smoke Detectors

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(Hollis, Queens -- May 8th, 2015) In light of recent deaths across the five boroughs, Senator Leroy G. Comrie (D-Hollis) hosted a Fire Prevention Workshop for residents of the community yesterday, May 7th, 2015. The workshop was the first in a series of planned fire prevention initiatives to help residents protect their families against home-based hazards. These initiatives are part of an effort to increase awareness and minimize risks from fire, carbon monoxide exposure and household appliances.

In the last few months, the City has been struck by a chain of heartbreaking fire and home safety incidents. One such left Brooklyn's Gabriel Sassoon surviving his seven children, in a tragic blaze sparking from a hotplate left on during Sabbath. Another, in Floral Park, left the Hugel family and two friends dead from carbon monoxide inhalation after their car was accidentally left on in their garage.

These horrific incidents prompted Senator Comrie to host this workshop series for his constituents to increase awareness and prevent future tragedies. "There's no substitute for prevention," he said at the event. "New Yorkers have all the tools they need to check home hazards right at their fingertips – but as we've seen, without proper use and upkeep, tragedy can still strike. We all need to work together to keep our families safe."

The workshop was co-hosted by the Alpha Phi Alpha Senior Center, Assembly Member Barbara Clark (D-Queens Village) and Council Member I. Daneek Miller (D-Jamaica).

"Preventable fires have been the cause of nearly all of the most gut wrenching tragedies I have encountered in all my years of public service," said Assembly Member Clark. "Recently this fact horrifically played itself out with the loss of two young children in my district. As such, even if efforts today only prevent one fire, they will have prevented the possibility of one monumental tragedy."

The FDNY's Lieutenant Nick D'allesandro stressed to residents that the best ways to keep their families safe was through taking preventative measures and, in the case of a fire, speedy outreach to the fire department. Lieutenant D'allesandro provided free smoke detectors to residents in attendance, and informed them that the Red Cross was available to administer installation free of cost. He offered tips to participants on how best to keep their residence safe, stressing the importance of carefully monitoring ovens and stoves during

cooking and the regular yearly replacement of carbon monoxide detectors.

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless and tasteless gas. Low-level or short-term exposure can lead to headaches, nausea, dizziness, difficulty breathing and confusion, while long-term or higher-level exposure can be fatal. CO alarms should be installed outside each sleeping area, on every level of the home, using interconnected alarms.

He also offered advice for residents observing Shabbat who use warming devices to heat food, saying that the best devices for long-term warming are slow cookers or cooktops with a built-in Shabbat mode. He advised to make sure warming devices have an independent testing laboratory label, and to keep anything that can burn away from heat sources (such as curtains, towels, paper and pets).

A robust Q&A portion was driven by the audience, who queried Lieutenant D'allesandro on a number of topics, such as: the distinction between carbon monoxide and smoke detectors; whether fire extinguishers expire; the amount of oxygen required for healthy breathing in enclosed areas when carbon monoxide is present (as in a running car in a snow drift or garage); how to correctly use a fire extinguisher; and, which types of extension cords are best for residential use.

Over forty people were in attendance.