

Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation: Juvenile-Set Fire Highlights Larger Problem

The Los Angeles Times has reported that the Buckweed wildfire in northern Los Angeles County has been attributed to a 10-year-old boy who was playing with matches. Unfortunately, fires set by juveniles are not unusual, and all of these fires have the potential to be highly destructive. Intervention programs such as Fire FRIENDS, however, can help stop this dangerous behavior.

Burbank, CA ([PRWeb](#)) November 5, 2007 -- The Los Angeles Times recently reported that the Buckweed wildfire in northern Los Angeles County has been attributed to a 10-year-old boy who was playing with matches. Unfortunately, fires set by juveniles are not unusual. Statistics have shown that at least 50% of all arson fires are set by juveniles, and that 38% of school-age children have set at least one fire in their lifetimes. This behavior has been shown to be progressive. Without proper intervention, as many as 84% of child firesetters will start another fire.

Children set fires for many different reasons. Some are curious or experimental, and just need education about fire. Others are expressing social, family or personal needs, and require professional intervention from behavioral health or social services, in addition to education about fire. According to the Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation (AARBF), the best way to prevent further fires is to intervene in these children's lives before it is too late. "It is often the case that juveniles who go on to set these fires demonstrate early warning signs such as an interest in fireplay," explains Johanna Wilkie, Prevention Manager for the Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation. "Through our program, Fire FRIENDS, we are able to quickly intervene before the child's behavior becomes dangerous."

The Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation partners with experts in the field to design programs that meet the needs of California firefighters in their constant battle to prevent destructive fires like those that recently hit Southern California. "Inappropriate and illegal firesetting causes billions of dollars per year in property loss, thousands of injuries, and death," notes Kenneth Fineman, PhD, a specialist in clinical and forensic psychology. "Counties or cities that have developed an early detection and intervention program show significantly lower arson rates and lower recidivism for those who have set fires in the past," says Fineman.

While the Southern California wildfires highlight the destruction that one juvenile firesetter can cause, they cannot show the many wildfires averted by targeted and appropriate burn and fire prevention efforts statewide.

About the Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation

The Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation (www.aarbf.org) is a California non-profit that derived its name and inspiration from an eight-year-old child, Alisa Ann, who was fatally burned in a backyard barbecue accident. AARBF is dedicated to promoting Burn Prevention education and is known nationwide for prevention messages such as Stop Drop & Roll and Cool-A-Burn. Along with burn prevention education, AARBF is dedicated to enhancing the lives of burn survivors and their families. Survivor assistance programs are designed to relieve emotional suffering, create opportunities for socializing, and help build the skills necessary to cope in a society that highly values physical appearance.

About Fire FRIENDS

AARBF is dedicated to promoting fire and burn prevention education. For this reason, AARBF manages Fire FRIENDS (www.firefriends.org), a regional juvenile firesetter intervention program that works with children and families to stop dangerous firesetting behavior. Fire FRIENDS is currently active in Orange County and provides services to fire departments and community partners across California. AARBF also commends fire departments

such as the Los Angeles County Fire Department, who have always been on the front lines of this issue.

For more information about any AARBF programs or services, or for interviewing possibilities, please call (818) 848-0223.

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