

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **NFSA Board of Directors Unveils Common Voices Advocates' Coalition**

The National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA) Board of Directors announced last week at its meeting in New York City that it has launched its latest initiative, an advocates' organization called Common Voices Coalition. The NFSA Board began building the Coalition in February of 2007 by bringing together fire advocates who have been affected by fire, but have turned tragic events into advocacy by supporting fire sprinklers.

The Coalition is well on its way to making a difference, with a plan that includes education, advocacy, and promotion of fire sprinklers. The six individuals who are serving as the Advisory Board for the Coalition include:

- Bonnie Woodruff, mother of Ben Woodruff
- Gail Minger, mother of Michael Minger
- Vina Drennan, widow of John Drennan, FDNY Fire Captain
- Amy Acton, Burn Survivor and Director of The Phoenix Society
- Justina Page, mother of Amos Page
- Donna Henson, mother of Dominic Passentino

The four mothers all have lost children to fire. The efforts of the Advisory Board include a plan to provide testimony and a speakers' bureau for others that are pursuing fire sprinkler legislation across the country. They have identified as priorities work on the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act, a bill in both the House and Senate in Washington, D.C. and participation with the IRC Residential Fire Sprinkler Coalition, a group focused on the inclusion of fire sprinklers in residential code requirements.

The Common Voices Coalition will also target specific national television programs in an effort for their grass-roots message to be heard. America has a fire problem, and fire sprinklers are part of the solution. The Advocates put a face on the statistics and bring the problem to life.

"I applaud the strength, courage and vision demonstrated by the Common Voices Coalition Advisory Board," said NFSA President John Viniello. "I expect when fire sprinklers become recognized as an inseparable part of the American fiber, we will inevitably look back on the works of this Coalition as being important milestones toward the elimination of fire as a threat to life."

"It is extremely gratifying for me as Chairman of the NFSA Board of Directors to provide support to such a worthy organization," said Wayne Gey. "With fire killing over 3000 people a year – most of those in dwellings – the need for the proven, time-tested

technology of automatic fire sprinklers where we live, work and play is obvious. By creating the means for the Common Voices Coalition to make their tragic experiences with fire heard, public awareness and sensitivity to fire protection issues will be heightened, resulting in a progressive decrease in fire-related fatalities.”

For more information about the Coalition, including a video that documents the formation of the group, visit [www.fireadvocates.org](http://www.fireadvocates.org) and join the proactive work of the advocates. Vickie Pritchett, Associate Director of Public Fire Protection for the NFSA is serving as the facilitator of the Coalition and may be reached at 615.533.0305 or [Pritchett@nfsa.org](mailto:Pritchett@nfsa.org).

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