

Three people escape flames on Hedley Street

By **Jim Herr** - March 1, 2018



CHEEKTOWAGA – A man, his oxygen dependent wife, and their adult daughter escaped their house unharmed after flames consumed their laundry room late Thursday morning.

Jeffery Vecere and his wife Kathleen have lived at 106 Hedley Street with their daughter since 1988. Around 11:30 am, his 27-year-old daughter smelled smoked and went to investigate with her oxygen dependent mom.

“They both came and saw the fire in the laundry room. They grabbed the fire extinguisher but unfortunately, I used it once before, and it was spent,” said Mr. Vecere.

He says the fire had consumed the entire room within one or two minutes.

“The clothes on the floor that were clean and that was getting ready to be put away, totally up, gone. They were already engulfed. By the time we got out, there was smoke throughout the entire house.”

Several fire departments were automatically dispatched to the scene for a working structure fire after Cheektowaga public safety dispatchers received a handful of calls reporting the fire.

Doyle Hose Company No. 2 Fire Chief Brian Rogowski was one of the first people on the scene.

"When I arrived on location there was heavy smoke pushing throughout the eaves of the house. There was fire starting to show on the [rear] of the house," said Mr. Rogowski.

A fire engine from Sloan was first to arrive on the scene.

"They made the initial attack here on the number two side. Between them and Doyle and Bellevue's initial attacks, we had a great stop on the fire and contained it," added Mr. Rogowski.

He says the fire damaged the back of the house where the laundry room is located and the kitchen. The front of the house sustained heat and smoke damage. Officials think they know the cause of the fire based on the eyewitness accounts and where the bulk of the damage is located.

"The fire investigators are on scene now to determine the cause, but it looks like its going to have started from the dryer at this point," said Mr. Rogowski.

The Red Cross will be caring for three to four people.

Mr. Vecere says the family home is insured and that they're going to rebuild.

"I'm 61-years-old. This is my retirement home. I wanted to repaint the walls because of they're covered with cigarette smoke – now I don't have to worry, I'll just put new walls up."



