

Six perish in Ohio home fire

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Six members of one family, including five children, were killed in a fire that swept through their trailer home early Sunday morning in Tiffin, Ohio, about 50 miles southeast of Toledo.

The home belonged to the mother of the five children, Anna Angel, who was at work when the fire broke out. Her boyfriend Timothy Fresch, father of one of the child victims, one-year-old Domanic Fresh, also died in the fire. Anna Angel's four daughters also perished: Tiara Angel, 6, Stormie Huey, 5, Trinitie Huey, 4, and Sunshine Huey, 3.

The fire broke out sometime before 8 a.m. Sunday. According to official records, the first 911 call came in at 7:45 a.m., and a first responder arrived at 7:48 a.m., with the first firefighters arriving minutes later at 7:50. They were prevented from entering the trailer because of the flames and thick smoke.

Firefighters at the scene said that the center of the trailer was engulfed in flames and that smoke had filled the entire trailer. Firefighters quickly extinguished the blaze, entered the trailer and removed the six victims, who were rushed to a nearby hospital but pronounced dead. Hospital officials say that all five died of smoke inhalation.

The trailer home was one in a park of about 150 trailer homes. Nancy Williams, who manages the trailer park, was alerted by one of her neighbors and told her son to call 911 while she ran to the trailer to see what she could do.

"I knew there were babies in there," she told the Associated Press. "But once we got there, there was nothing we could do. It was fully engulfed in flames and we couldn't get in."

Neighbors reported that they often would see the children outside playing and running around the grounds. The two oldest children attended kindergarten and according to neighbors helped to look after the younger ones.

Anna was at work at the time of the disaster at a nearby Burger King restaurant where she has worked for the past seven years. When she was called and told of the fire, she rushed home and was then taken to the hospital where she identified her five children. Hospital officials did not let her see her boyfriend's body due to his extensive burns.

The Burger King restaurant where Anna worked as well as neighbors in her trailer park are raising funds to help pay for the funeral expenses.

Fire investigators have not yet determined a cause of the fire, which they say will take several more days. They are also waiting for autopsy reports to be completed. They have noted that nothing appeared suspicious and that there were working smoke detectors in the trailer.

Tiffin, a town of about 18,000 in northwest Ohio, is like many low-income working class communities throughout the state and country. The official poverty rate is over 16 percent, about 2 percentage points higher than the Ohio state poverty level.

The telling statistic is that the average household income is less than \$35,000 a year, nearly \$14,000 less than the state average and \$18,000 below the national average. This means that most working class households are living either in poverty or near poverty.

The city was home to many manufacturing plants during most of the 20th century, including the National Machinery Company, Webster Industries, the Tiffin Glass works and American Standard Company. Like much of the Midwest, the city has lost manufacturing jobs since the 1970s as factories shut down or moved elsewhere.

Since the economic collapse of 2008, wage-cutting has been the norm for those jobs that have remained. This is especially the case in auto and auto parts manufacturing, where the Obama administration demanded massive wage cuts as part of the government

bailout of General Motors and Chrysler Corporation.

Tiffin is a few miles east of Findlay, Ohio, where the United Steelworkers betrayed a strike by nearly 1,000 Cooper Tire workers in 2012 and imposed massive wage and benefits concessions on the workers.

No financial data has been released about Angel's family, but it can be safely assumed that with a job at a fast food restaurant as her income they were struggling very hard. The family had no car and used bicycles and strollers to get around. Anna had to ride home on a bicycle Sunday morning when she was told her home was ablaze.

Mobile homes are much more dangerous than single- or two-family homes, but being less expensive than buying a home and in many cases cheaper than renting they are often the only option. Fire experts say that it takes only three minutes for a fire to engulf a mobile home, giving people inside very little time to get out.

People are three times as likely to die in a fire in a mobile home than in a single- or two-family home, primarily because the fire spreads rapidly through the home and the structure itself intensifies the heat and smoke buildup. Lower standards for electrical wiring result in fires caused by the electrical system twice as frequently as in traditional houses.



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