

Trailer teaches kids how to cope with fire



By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News
Smoke fills the special bedroom of the Fire Safety House during a Fire Prevention Month demonstration at West Elementary.

Students from Sandy Jamison's class head out the back door and down the escape ladder.

The non-toxic smoke is part of the lesson, to let kids know what it is like to be in a fire, and how to find a safe way out.

Assistant Rural Fire Chief David Allen brought the special smoke trailer down from McCook, Neb., and it was at West Elementary on Friday and at Wal-Mart on Saturday.

Rural Fire Chief Kenny Griffith, with help from volunteers Justin Bentzinger and William McKnight, took the kids through the trailer, which includes a small living room, kitchen and upstairs bedroom with an outside porch and ladder.

In the living room, the fireman talked about the dangers found around a fireplace and other things that might cause a fire.

From the living room, the kids move to the kitchen, where they saw how they could get burned by hot water,

and the dangers of using the stove or microwave without an adult in the room.

Upstairs, the kids gathered in the bedroom, and the firemen talked to them about how to tell if there is a fire somewhere else in the house, like hearing a fire alarm. The room has a second door which the kids were told to check with the back of their hand to see if it is hot. If they feel a hot door, the fireman said, they are to go out another way, and then the smoke started to fill the bedroom and the fire alarm went off.

The kids filed out the back door and were helped down the ladder.

One of the students was held back by a fireman, and when all the others were out, fire fighters ask the teacher and kids if all of them were out. When they said there was one missing, the fireman asked where to look for the missing boy, and in unison they said, "the bedroom."

The last boy then came out the back door and down the ladder.

Besides the fire safety house, the fireman showed the kids the equipment they wear, and let them climb up into the cab of the fire truck.

Smoke filled the small bedroom of a fire safety house trailer (above), and second graders from Sandy Jamison's class moved quickly to escape out the back door. The safety lesson (below) started as Sherman County rural firefighters William McKnight and Justin Bentzinger and Chief Kenny Griffith watched the West Elementary students enter the Fire Safety House, ducking their heads to enter the living room for Fire Prevention Month training. Phillip Carver, Sarah Johnson and John Snyder (bottom left) answered questions from Bentzinger about safety hazards near the fireplace. In the kitchen (bottom right), Bentzinger told the kids that pan handles sticking out are a hazard. Josh David, Juan Sandoval, Ryleigh Paxton, Sean Johnson, D.J. Glassman, Tanner Schmidt, Shain Sapp, Stephani DeLaRosa, Thatcher Jones and Xavier Colby gathered around to hear him. Escaping from the smoky bedroom (right), Sean Johnson waited while McKnight helped Sandoval climb down.

Photos by Tom Betz / The Goodland Star-News

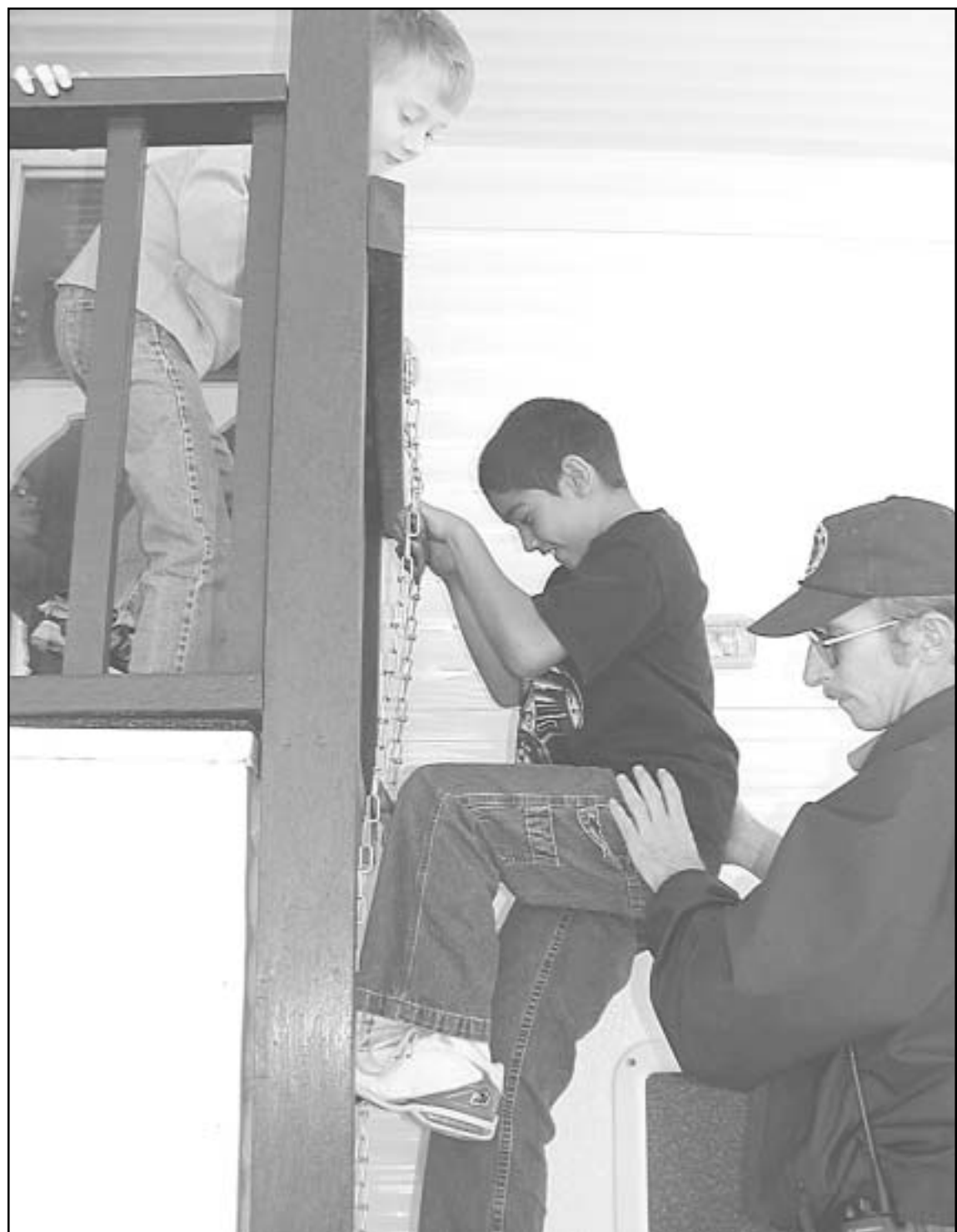


Photo by Robin Flax / The Goodland Star-News