

# Smoky encounter

## Delivery man alerts family to fire

By Joanne Maliszewski and Bob Sklar staff writers

Tuesday night proved one of the more exciting nights in Stace Mullins' job as a delivery man for Domino's Pizza. He found himself climbing on the roof of a new cluster home, trying to extinguish a chimney fire.

"By far, it was an exciting night," the Farmington Hills resident said. "I thought, 'Maybe I should become a firefighter.' I never thought about that until last night."  
A couple with a small child lives in the home, but no one was hurt in the 10 p.m. fire, which broke out on the 35500 block of Bingham Court at Drakes Crossing, a new cluster development north of Grand River, west of Drake.

"It was a quickly spreading fire that caused an early collapse of the roof into the great room," Farmington Hills Deputy Fire Chief Peter Baldwin said.

The fire left an estimated \$100,000 in structural damage to the two-story home, part of a new three-unit building at Drakes Crossing. Content damage was estimated at \$10,000.

"Most of the contents is salvageable," Baldwin said.

MULLINS, WHO DELIVERS for Domino's Pizza, 31605 Grand River, in Farmington, had just made a delivery about 10 p.m. at the nearby Chatham Hills Apartments when he noticed an unusual amount of smoke coming from the chimney of a home

'Save life, save life — that's the main concern.'

— Stace Mullins  
Domino's driver

at Drakes Crossing.

The 21-year-old quickly found the burning home and alerted the residents their chimney was on fire.

"It looked like there was too much smoke coming out. I went around the house and saw flames coming out of the chimney," Mullins said. "I knocked on the guy's door and said, 'Your house is on fire.' My main concern was that the guy was awake."

While the homeowner called 9-1-1 and assured that his family was safe, Mullins, a two-year veteran driver, put his safety training to work. He climbed to the roof with a portable extinguisher to dampen the flames.

The fire, however, spread quickly from the chimney to the attic above the great room. It took 30 firefighters about 20 minutes to extinguish the blaze. There was smoke damage throughout, Baldwin said. Quickly returning to work, Mullins said: "Working gives me the opportunity to be the eyes and ears for our neighborhood. I'm glad I could help him."

Investigators revisited the scene Wednesday to try to pinpoint what caused the fire. They suspect a possible fireplace design defect. They said the fireplace had been serviced

for a drafting problem earlier that day.

THE FIREPLACE had been going about three hours before Mullins discovered the flames, Farmington Hills Fire Marshal Stephen Hume said.

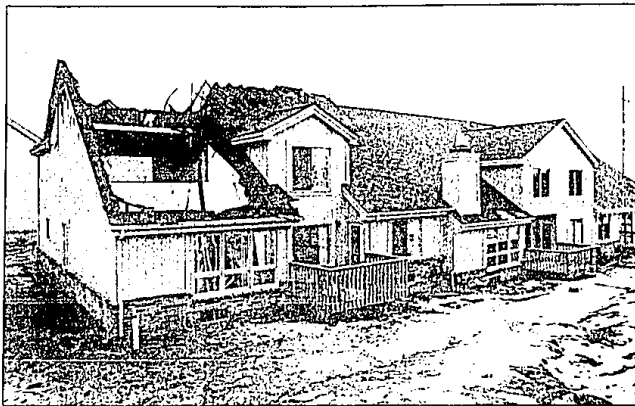
"If I do catch stuff like this happening when I'm out on deliveries, I try to help if I can," Mullins said. "Save life, save life — that's the main concern."  
Drakes Crossing neighbor Chris Lewerenz looked toward the burned home Wednesday morning from her balcony and mused, "It's so sad to see that. It's very nice living here. It's beautiful."  
She was just thankful no one was hurt.

## Man douses kitchen fire

A resident used a hallway extinguisher to douse a kitchen fire that broke out while he was heating up cooking oil at Mulrwood Apartments Sunday night.

No one was hurt in the fire, which occurred about 6 p.m. in an apartment on the 35400 block of Mulrwood Court, in the Grand River-Drake area. Damage was estimated at \$250.

Firefighters checked for extension of the fire, but found none, according to a Farmington Hills fire report.



This is a rear view of the cluster home damaged by fire Tuesday night.

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