

Vacation Turns Tragic When MTA Family's Home Burns

(Sept. 13, 2002) A vacation for two MTA employees was interrupted by tragedy, Sept. 3, when their home burned to the ground during a fierce brush fire that swept through Bouquet Canyon.

The fire, which also destroyed four other homes in the Leona Valley area, left Dave and Sandy Woods and their sons, Dave Jr. and Derek, homeless. The family currently is living in a hotel.

Dave Woods is a transit operations supervisor in the Bus Operations Control Center. Sandy Woods is a customer information agent in Metro Information.

To help the Woods family during their time of need, their co-workers have set up a trust fund -- Account No. 121289 -- at the MTA Credit Union. Employees who want to help the family can deposit money into the account.

"The money will be used for food, clothing and the bare essentials to get them back on their feet," says Communications Officer Dave Ullrich of Metro Information who, along with Administrative Aide Carrie Morris set up the account. "They won't have to eat Red Cross food all the time."

The Woods' home and the others that burned, Sept. 3, had survived a smaller fire only eight days earlier. Fueled by dry brush and high temperatures, the blaze that destroyed the homes outraced firefighters who were fighting the flames in the narrow, wooded canyon between Santa Clarita and Palmdale.

Residents reported seeing a suspicious car in the area just before the fires started. The cause of the fires is under investigation.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

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News service photo shows son D.J. Woods sorting through the ashes of the Woods home that was destroyed in the Bouquet Canyon fire Sept. 3.