

Fire destroys home

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Wednesday, 07 July 2010 20:02 - Last Updated Wednesday, 07 July 2010 20:04



Co-workers of Mia Houchin saw the flames before she did during the wee hours Saturday morning.

Fire destroyed a single-wide mobile home Mia shared with her husband James and their two young daughters at 305 Third Street.

Mia, a local Jazzercise instructor, works mornings at McDonald's Restaurant.

About 1:30 a.m. on July 3, a friend and co-worker called to tell Mia her home was on fire.

"She could see it from the drive-through window," Mia said.

The Houchins had traveled to Kearney earlier that day to see a movie and were at Mia's parent's home when the call came.

Mia said James left immediately and arrived at his home just after the Gothenburg Volunteer Fire Department.

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In the meantime, Mia—who is seven months pregnant—traveled to the emergency room at Gothenburg Memorial Hospital because of contractions.

The Houchins stayed with Kim and Miriam Stratton that night.

Fire chief Mark Ballmer said the home was engulfed in flames before fire fighters arrived so there wasn't much they could do.

Ballmer said the fire marshal determined the cause to be from a fluorescent light fixture that shorted out.

Damage is estimated at \$60,000 for the home and \$20,000 for contents, he said.

Mia said there wasn't anything that could be saved.

Since that night, the family has been staying with Mia's sister, Jocelyn Bluel Odom, in Gothenburg.

Mia said they've received many donations.

"The help we've received from family and friends is tremendous," she said.

Even though the family lost everything, Mia is grateful for family and friends.

"Home is wherever we are as family," she said.

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The Houchins, who had home-owner insurance, are waiting to hear from their insurance company before they decide what to do about housing.

James is a self-employed contractor. The couple's daughters are Mina, 7; and Ada, 4.