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Confederation College pre-service firefighter students, from left, Riley Tucker, Taya Stamler, and Devon Wanakamik are credited for rescuing three people from their burning home, Friday.

# Students save day

*Garage blaze puts firefighting lessons to the test*

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Three people are lucky to be alive thanks to three Confederation College pre-service firefighter students who knew what to do in the heat of the moment.

Students Taya Stamler, Riley Tucker and Devon Wanakamik were carpooling their way into the college's fire training centre Friday morning when they noticed smoke coming from an attached garage at 746 Porcupine Blvd.

"We were taught how to read smoke and we saw it was coming out quick," said Wanakamik. "It was pretty dense and dark and high velocity."

The group knew it was time for anyone in the house to get out because the fire would quickly spread.

Tucker stopped his car, rushed to the home and began pounding on the door.

"It was pretty early in the morning and you never know if people are inside sleeping and that is what we assumed," said Wanakamik.

An older man finally opened the door. "When I said 'Hey your garage is on fire,' I saw the look in his eyes," said Tucker.

To their surprise, the man rushed back into the home to an interior door that lead to the garage and swung it open.

"When he opened the door he let in more oxygen and that made the fire bigger and now there were flames coming out (of the garage) and into the house, then he shut the door," said Tucker.

"I asked him if there was anyone in the house and he said 'no,' said



PHOTO SUPPLIED BY SHANE FERGUSON

**Heavy smoke billowed from an attached garage at a Porcupine Boulevard home on Friday morning.**

Stamler. "I was trying to get him to put shoes on and get out of the house."

But the man instead began to fill buckets with water to put on the fire. Stamler said the danger was escalating and they urged him to get out and wait for the fire trucks to come.

"I told him, 'No. Keep the door closed'. Then he opened it again and the flames started shooting out. He finally closed the door and went outside to safety. I don't know if he understood us," she said.

Meanwhile, Tucker decided to do a final check and retrieve the man's shoes that were near the door when he got the shock of his life.

"I went to grab his shoes when I saw two more (people) walk down the stairs — his son and a baby," said Tucker. "I thought 'Oh my God. Get out of here right now.'"

They finally got everyone out.

"We put them into our vehicle because it was running and warm and

fire trucks began arriving," said Stamler.

No one is more proud of the three than Shane Ferguson, the manager of the pre-service firefighter program. He said they were able to use their training in a life-saving situation.

"It's very military here and the way we run things is, you have to be here on time because training is important. You can't miss any time," he said, adding that tardiness is normally punished with push-ups.

"There's no push-ups here today," said Ferguson, excusing the three students for their lateness on Friday.

Thunder Bay Fire platoon chief Mark Ferrence said when fire crews arrived, they found heavy smoke and flames coming from the garage. Ferrence said damage in the garage was pretty extensive and the house suffered moderate smoke damage. No one was hurt in the incident.