

# From the ashes: Godfrey woman rebuilding after fire causes complete loss

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
December 1 2017 10:57 AM



**GODFREY** - Pat Conway, 78, of Godfrey, lost most of her home to a fire on Nov. 27, 2017.

Conway lives near Humbert Road, and her home is incredibly visible to passing traffic, her daughter, Dianna Grable said. It was that visibility which may have kept the fire from being a tragedy instead of a total loss. Grable said several people saw the home

burning, knew her mother and stopped to offer their assistance. Without those people who arrived before she could, Grable said her mother would be in a much worse situation.

Grable said when her mother's house caught fire, it started in the garage. Before the garage became a complete conflagration, Conway's friend, Elizabeth Jun, who lives across Humbert Road in the Storeyland subdivision rushed to the home and consoled Conway, who was incredibly stressed and frightened at the fire. Jun also took care of Conway's dog who had escaped the fire with Conway.

A cat was still in the home, however, and the fire grew from the garage, Grable said. She said Jeff Carver, owner of Carver's Barbecue, was driving past on his motorcycle with a friend. Upon seeing the blaze, the two immediately rushed to Conway's assistance.

"Jeff and his friend kicked down the front door, went in and got the cat," Grable said.

With every living thing out of her home, Conway had to watch her irreplaceable items become enveloped by flames. Grable said she arrived five minutes after calling her mother, which was prompted by Conway's medical alert bracelet sounding an alarm. The Godfrey Fire Protection District arrived shortly after that.

Unfortunately, Conway's house has been deemed almost a complete loss. While the fire itself destroyed most of the kitchen and her garage - including her car - the conditions of the home having a metal roof caused most of the heat to be trapped inside the home. Subsequent attempts to eliminate hot spots resulted in the collapse of Conway's ceilings, which only complicated the already-massive amount of smoke and water damage.

"You never realize just how bad smoke damage is," Grable said. "We took the little charger from her medical alert bracelet and tried to clean it over and over, but it still smells like smoke. There's nothing we can do to make it not smell like smoke. Everything in her house is like that."

Since the fire, Conway has been trying to piece her life back together. Grable said they are in the process of replacing her clothes and other essentials, adding the home and car may be complete losses.

"They may have to start from the bottom and build it all back after this," she said.

That may seem daunting, but both Grable and Conway are boosted by the amount of community support they have received. Following the fire, the Godfrey Little Caesar's provided a free dinner to Conway and her family, and assured her support through this grueling process.

[A GoFundMe account has also been created](#), and the family is asking the community to assist with helping Conway rebuild her life during this difficult time. Grable said she is hoping the support the community has offered thus far will only increase.

Thus far, the GoFundMe has raised \$1,050 of a \$5,000 goal by 13 people in the last two days. It was created by Grable's husband, Russ Grable.