



NEWS RELEASE

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Release Date: Immediately
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(Preschool Evacuated After Multiple Explosions and Smell of Natural Gas)

At 9:05 am today, Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue was called to Westside Church of Christ at 17415 NW Walker Road in Beaverton following a 9-1-1 call reporting multiple explosions and smell of natural gas. Upon arrival, TVF&R Rescue 61 could smell natural gas and hear “popping” sounds from the building. They called for additional resources and confirmed that all teachers and children had evacuated and were accounted for from Angels Montessori School located in the building. NW Natural and PGE crews were also called to respond and shut-off utilities.

With backup teams and a water supply ready to be utilized if needed, firefighter crews began searching the large two-story commercial building for fire or smoke, and the source of the explosions. Finding no sign of smoke or fire, crews accessed the roof where they quickly identified a large heating and air conditioning unit that had malfunctioned. Church officials were made aware of the damaged unit and instructed to contact a professional heating company to have their system inspected before turning gas and power back on to the building.

At the time of the explosions, there were 11 children (ages 2 to 5) present in the Angels Montessori School. Karen Eubanks, Public Information Officer, states, “The teachers and staff did an excellent job of keeping the children calm and safe in this situation.” Eubanks added, “They immediately executed their evacuation plan and retreated to their pre-identified “safe house” in the adjacent residential neighborhood.” The children were released to their parents.

Hillsboro Fire Department and Beaverton Police Department also responded to assist.

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