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Grads step up to law enforcement

Published: Friday, April 4, 2008

By Joel Banner Baird
Free Press Staff Writer

Decades ago, an injustice prompted a young girl to pursue a career as a cop.

"There was this little kid and his parents were yanking him around and yelling at him," said Amy Jacobs, 32, of Richford.

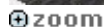
"I remember trying to borrow a pen from my dad. I wanted to get the guy's license plate. That's when it began for me."

At 6 p.m. today at the First Congregational Church in Burlington, Jacobs and eight other Vermont women will buck generations of stereotyping and graduate from a program designed to bring them closer to careers in law enforcement or corrections.

Jacobs said the nine-week course, operated by the Essex-based nonprofit Vermont Works for Women, reinforced a long-postponed ambition.



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"I've wanted to be a police officer ever since I was a little girl," she said. "I used to study in the encyclopedia on how to become an FBI agent."

Instead, Jacobs enlisted in the U.S. Marines, but didn't get the military police training she'd hoped for. She settled for work as an aviation specialist on an airfield in Yuma, Ariz.

Ten years later, she returned to Vermont and took jobs as a substitute teacher.

The hands-on approach to learning with the Step Up to Law Enforcement class -- and the chance to shadow working police officers -- brought her out of semi-retirement.

It also clarified her personal goal: to begin studies at the Vermont Police Academy in January.

She's already scoping out jobs in Chittenden County.

"I want to educate and help," she said. "I want to help communities resolve problems. I feel competent to apply to any police department."

Jacob's classmate, Tara Hathaway, 31, of Barre City came to the law enforcement course through retail.

"I'm very good with people; I'm a good listener," she said. "I knew I wanted a job where I worked with people."

She admired her two uncles who worked in law enforcement. She thought she ought to become a teacher. After three career-assessment tests indicated she might be suited for police work, she signed up with Step Up to Law Enforcement.

"We took a tour of the Chittenden County Correctional Facility," Hathaway said. "We went into an area that had sex offenders and other serious criminals. But I didn't see the crimes. I actually saw men. I saw people who

Christiana Pepin (right) of South Hero practices a physical-control technique on Department of Corrections Superintendent Jay Simons with help from Corrections Officer Michaela Hammond during a law enforcement course through Vermont Works for Women.

Photo courtesy of Rachel Jolly

STORYCHAT

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I disagree 100% with you rspreeman. Perhaps you should look into some of the different self defense techniques out there: aikido, judo, jiu jitsu to name a few.

Posted: Fri Apr 04, 2008 6:30 pm

Re the post below - NONSENSE. Size and strength DO matter, and those women would not get a sizable determined man down into that position.

Posted: Fri Apr 04, 2008 5:15 pm

Agreed that it takes a bit of work to get a man of his size down on the floor flat. I would place a friendly wager that either of those ladies alone could place him on the ground after a little guidance. Size doesn't matter a whole lot if you know what you're doing and have trained regularly.

The wrist lock she has on him in the photo, could have been achieved while he was standing. She could then tell him to lay down, force him down with the lock, or just break his wrist and go from there.

However, just knowing the moves and techniques required to create locks in one position can allow for a person to transfer one into many other positions.

That wrist lock can be done from tens if not hundreds of different stances, positions, and with varying degrees of leverage. If she swings that hand up above his shoulder while keeping his arm straight, that's a toasted shoulder. Tuck that arm behind him and drive the elbow up to his neck, same deal but with more opportunity to break the wrist after the shoulder is separated-- throw the left arm up around the neck and you've got a one armed guy trying to defend a neck hold (all 1000x's easier said than done). The elbow is also pretty vulnerable when the arm is extended like that. It's like piecing up a chicken, twist and pop the joints out with violent motion.

Practice makes perfect, and don't give up if you miss the first hold-- many more locks and holds can be put into place while the attacker is distracted by defending the initial move. The body can only bend certain ways and it doesn't take a hulking



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need positive guidance in life. I guess I'm open-minded."

Her application for employment was sent to the Vermont Department of Corrections on Monday.

Kristen Mullins, director of programs for Vermont Works for Women, said law enforcement and corrections officials increasingly value what qualified women bring to their institutions: communication skills, a good grasp of conflict resolution and a knack for de-escalating disputes.

Rachel Jolly, who coordinates the law enforcement program, said the course broadened her horizons.

"I never would have considered being a police officer," she said. "But yesterday, it actually crossed my mind."

IF YOU GO Nine Vermont women celebrate their graduation from the pre-law Step Up to Law Enforcement program.

WHEN: 6 -7:30 p.m. today


WHERE: First Congregational Church, 82 S. Winooski Ave., Burlington

TO LEARN MORE: Contact Kristen Mullins, director of programs at Vermont Works for Women, 878-0004, ext. 108.

WEB: Visit Vermont Works for Women online: www.vtworksforwomen.org

Contact Joel Banner Baird at 660-1843 or joelbaird@bfp.burlingtonfreepress.com

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person to apply many of the locks, just an experienced person that knows how to move with their target.

Fun stuff (but keep in mind it's not roughhousing... some of the locks can go very quickly from no pain to damage), glad to see the ladies taking the opportunity to try it out. The best part is that you can practice the locks and throws all day long and not get worked over like the contact endured through sparing.

Bravo to your buddy JBT for helping teach them.

Posted: Fri Apr 04, 2008 6:11 am

In order to control the person, you have to first get them into the position Jay Simons is in....I know Jay Simons and I doubt either or both together of those women could get him onto the floor in that position without his consent.
JBT

Posted: Fri Apr 04, 2008 4:19 am

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