



The Winchester Star

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Fire and Rescue offers program to gain career insight

By Robert Igoe

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Winchester - Frederick County youths interested in a career in emergency response or seeking a way to give back to the community now have an opportunity through the Frederick County Fire and Rescue Association.

Every month, the members of the Frederick County Fire and Rescue Explorer Post 154 meet to discuss techniques, equipment, and other important aspects of firefighting and ambulance duties.

Like other Explorer groups, Post 154 was created in cooperation with the Boy Scouts of America as a means to offer youths between ages 14 and 20 a chance to gain a working insight into a particular career field.

"There are many opportunities for young people," said post advisor Rodney Snapp, "so it is very important to capture their interest at an early age. The Explorer Post exposes them to the skills and abilities that are needed to become a Firefighter or EMT."

As part of their training, the eight members of the post, who range in age from 14 to 16, have been certified in CPR and first aid. Other skills taught by the post include protective clothing and fire extinguisher use, as well as other issues involved with fire and rescue.

For youths interested in volunteering for or making a career of emergency services, Snapp said that the Explorers is an ideal entry point for that future.

"Hopefully the Explorers will gain insight into a career that they may want to pursue," he



Frederick County Fire and Rescue Department emergency management and education specialist Gail Miller watches a volunteer firefighter in training with members of the Frederick County Fire and Rescue Association Explorers Post. Explorers participating in the recent January session were Ryan Steele, 15, of Frederick County, and Josh Hockenberry and Brad Pitt, both 15 and freshmen at Millbrook High School.

(Jeff Taylor)

said. "The Explorer Post allows them to get real hands-on experience that will lead to skill development. It will also give them a sense of giving back to others in the community."

Knapp said the post also helps fire and rescue companies by providing prospective members with training that they may not otherwise have by age 16, when they can legally volunteer for fire and rescue work. He said he would have liked to see such a program when he was younger.

"When I became interested in the fire service at the age of 14 there was not a program like this that was offered," he said. "I saw this program as an opportunity to help others learn about fire and rescue services."

Post 154 meets monthly, usually at one of the county's fire and rescue companies or the county Public Safety Building on Coverstone Lane.

For more information on becoming a member of the post, contact Frederick County Fire and Rescue Association Volunteer Coordinator Christine Franchok at 722-8358 or visit the Web site at www.couragetocare.net .