

Rape

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"A lot of the class has to do with risk awareness and risk reduction so women can reduce their chances of being a victim. It shows things that a woman can do when she's at home or out alone," he said. "However if those things fail, we teach actual physical, self-defense techniques, utilizing a woman's personal weapons, fists, knees, feet and head, and how to apply them to an attacker's vulnerable areas. What we're trying to do is empower women and let them realize how much mental and physical power they really possess."

During the course, participants learn escape techniques through one-on-one instruction and repeated drills in a safe and supportive environment where only women are allowed. On the final night of class, students are required to apply the self-defense techniques and escape a simulated attack.

R.A.D. Instructor and Rantoul Police Officer Stephanie Mechelhoff said the simulation was integral to giving students a true sense of self-reliance.

"The attackers are wearing protective suits, so you go all out, trying to escape and they don't let anyone off easy," she said. "It feels very scary and very real. It proves that under stress you can use the techniques and escape."

Schlosser pointed to R.A.D. statistics as proof of the need for such a program: Every six minutes, a rape is reported in the United States; 10 times as many rapes are committed as are reported; four in 10 rapes take place in the victim's home; 78 percent of rape victims know their attacker.

"What people don't seem to realize is that most often the attacker is an acquaintance. It's someone they know but they're not expecting the attack, so

they're unprepared," Schlosser said.

Rantoul Police Officer Amy Milk, also a certified instructor, said the course is something any female, from pre-teen on up can easily learn. And it offers benefits beyond the risk awareness and self-defense techniques because it boosts self-esteem, she said.

"A lot of women have never been attacked but they have heard about someone else going through it and they live in a sense of fear of it happening to them," Milk said. "Learning the techniques and putting them to a test through the simulation shows women, maybe for the first time, that they have personal power."

Although R.A.D. graduate Liz Frankie hopes never to be in a situation where she would need self-defense techniques, she agreed that the course is a means for women to take control of their lives.

"I would highly recommend every woman take this course," she said. "I think it's a very important issue that women be able to gain confidence in themselves that they can defend themselves. Anybody can use these techniques. And the way that the instructors teach is very supportive and very empowering. Even though you may be small and your attacker is much larger than you, you don't have to be a victim."

As far as Clow is concerned, claiming her power through the class has proved invaluable.

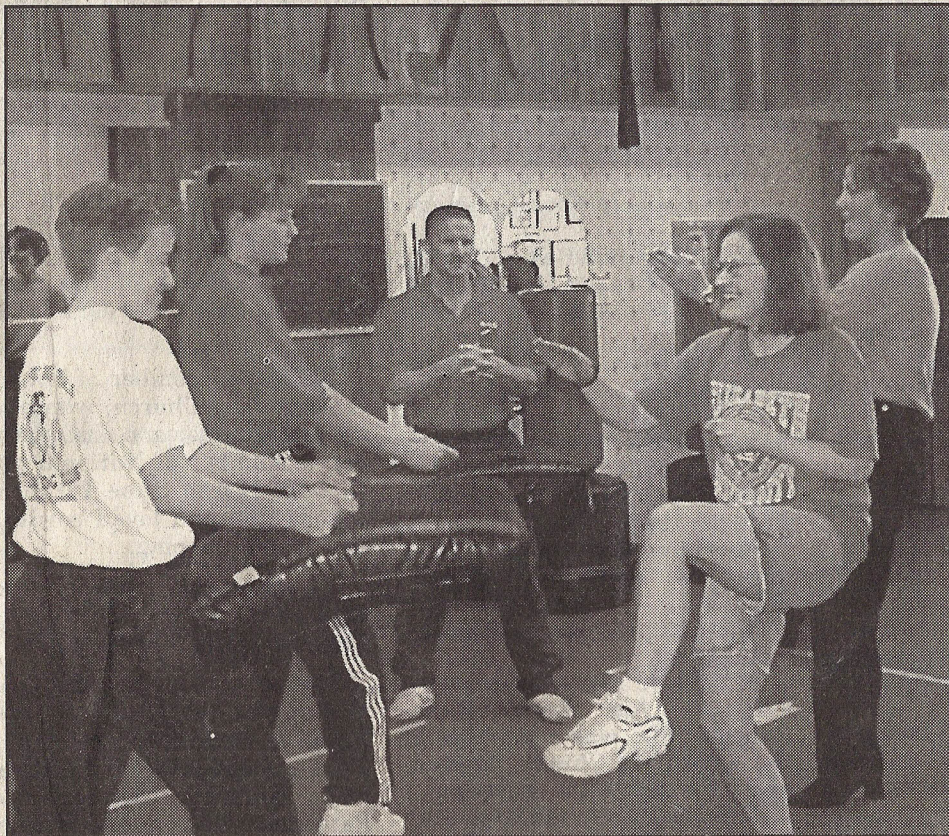
"I told my classmates on that final night when we had the simulation, the first time he got away. Tonight I feel I got away," she said. "It was a great feeling."

Women interested in taking the course can call Sgt. Schlosser at the Rantoul Police Department at 893-2103.

WEDNESDAY

TAKE THAT!
Rantoul Police Sgt. Mike Schlosser, a certified instructor in Rape Aggression Defense systems, watches as students Liz Frankie and Angela Clow practice self-defense moves with instructors RPD Officers Amy Milk and Stephanie Mechelhoff. Frankie & Clow recently completed the R.A.D. course, offered through the Rantoul Police Department.

(Rantoul Press photo)



Course counters rape aggression

BY LYNN CRANDALL
Rantoul Press reporter

Angela Clow bears a small scar on her chin, a reminder of the ordeal she suffered 15 years ago when she was attacked at knife point. The emotional wounds she's carried, though less visible, have been a little harder to overlook.

"I don't think of the attack every single day, but it's always in the back of my head," she said. "It's such a bad feeling when someone has total control over you and you have no say."

But self-defense training

Clow recently completed has gone a long way toward healing the wounds and rebuilding her self-confidence. The program - Rape Aggression Defense Systems - is a 12-hour course offered through the Rantoul Police Department. The program graduated its first class May 30.

"The course has changed my life," said Clow, a Rantoul village employee. "I feel much more confident in general, and particularly in knowing I have taken back my say. No one is ever going to put me in that

position again."

Rantoul Police Sgt. Mike Schlosser, a certified R.A.D. instructor, said the course teaches how to prevent attack and abduction by raising a woman's awareness of potentially dangerous situations. But if avoidance is impossible, the program goes against the prevailing concept of compliance as a way to survive. Instead, Schlosser said, the course equips women to defend themselves and escape.

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Rantoul, Illinois 61866