

Gliding Stars to present annual ice show

"Food, Fitness and Fun on Ice" will be held at 7 p.m. Friday, March 23 and at 1 p.m. Saturday, March 24 at the Amherst Pepsi Center, 1615 Amherst Manor Drive. Tickets cost \$8. Call 608-8345 or visit www.glidingstars.org.

Exploring their paths

Youth participate in Explorer posts

by JILL SCHMELZER, Reporter

First aid. Firefighting techniques. Community service.

These are just some of the opportunities that drew newly appointed firefighter Jill Zymanek to the Hutchinson Hose Explorer Post in 2004.

She and Adam Oehmler, both children of Williamsville firefighters, launched the Hutchinson Hose program with the help of Fire Chief Jim Zymanek and others.

A group of 15 young people, ages 14 to 21, meet monthly and attend training sessions with the firefighters throughout the year. They also each perform about 100 hours of community service.

After learning the basics of firefighting, Jill wanted to delve deeper into the volunteer services. She was appointed a firefighter in December and is now training to enter smoke-filled environments, eventually drive the apparatus and is currently attending New York State Emergency Medical Technician Training.

Explorers can respond to calls and assist where needed, but they cannot enter burning buildings or perform first aid, although they are trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of defibrillators.



Both Main-Transit and Getzville fire departments also have Explorer Posts, which were established through the Boy Scouts of America.

Carl Fischer, senior adviser to the Main-Transit Explorer Post, said there are currently 25 youths between 14 and 18 who are members.

Since its inception in 2000, 21 members have gone on to become firefighters, he said.

Fischer and co-senior adviser Bill Karl teach the youths everything about firefighting, including first aid and use of the defibrillator, Fischer said.

"We have an excellent group," he added. "They are very well-supervised."

Fischer noted that the program teaches the teens what happens in an emergency

situation and prepares them for how to handle it.

"They are active people," Fischer said of the Explorers. "They get in on (the) ground floor, and they are very good."

Steve Herberger, adviser to the Getzville Explorers, said his post does a lot of community service. The Explorers are also trained to work in situations such as pre-planning for the fire district, safety and building.

Getzville Explorers have adopted a section of the Amherst Bike Path, where members volunteer

often to clean the area. They also mark the fire hydrants during the winter and plan food drives and other fundraisers.

The group was begun in 2000 after the Boy Scouts challenged the department to start the program, preparing the youths for fire service and other life lessons, Herberger said.

For more information, visit www.hutchinson-hose.com, www.getzvillefire.com or MTFD.com.



Jill Zymanek stands with her father, Williamsville Fire Chief Jim Zymanek.



Jill Zymanek, front left, Katie Dugan, Kelly Smith, Christina Haffa, Adam Petrie, Randi Hubbard, Adam Oehmler, back left, Rob Finley, Greg Smith and Kevin Muck.



Assistant Chief Tom Ratzel instructs an air pack drill at the Erie County Fire Training facility.



Jim Olivieri Jr., Jill Zymanek and Christina Haffa provide EMT and splinting care to "patient" Shawni Manning.



Hose and hydrant drill - Chief Zymanek with Greg and Kelly Smith.



Katie Dugan, left, works retrieval at the water rescue drill on Ellicott Creek.



Randi Hubbard practices under the watchful eye of Dave Muck.



Chief Zymanek works with Kelly Smith on the front line at the Village of Williamsville holiday bonfire.



Blake Strom, past chief of the Getzville Fire Co., poses with his son, Jacob, an Explorer; daughter Jessica, an original Getzville Explorer and now active firefighter, and father, Rod, a Buffalo firefighter.