

Explorers get early taste of how firefighters work

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WINTER PARK — Rob Murphy, 15, already knows he is not cut out for the "9 to 5 desk job" and would rather spend his time helping people.

"When I was young, I wanted to be a fireman or a policeman," said the Orlando teen-ager. "But I decided on being a fireman because they help people more."

Murphy and eight other youngsters are members of the Winter Park Fire Department's Explorers Post 644, which was organized two weeks ago.

"The experience will train me young to be a firefighter," Murphy said Thursday after an Explorers session at the fire department. "I will get a head start on a lot of other people."

Other members of the fire department's Explorers are: Capt. Mark Adams, Lt. Lisa Benevides, engineer/secretary Kevin Balliet, engineer/treasurer Rand Huber, Barry Kelly, Chris Nunn, Doug McClure and Tom Wallis.

"We have gotten more and more involved in public education," said Assistant Fire Chief Mike Molthop in explaining the new program. "We no-

ticed how well Explorers was working with the police department so we thought we'd try it."

The intent of the program is to expose youths to a potential career, give them guidance and responsibility and utilize their free time with a worthwhile activity, Molthop said.

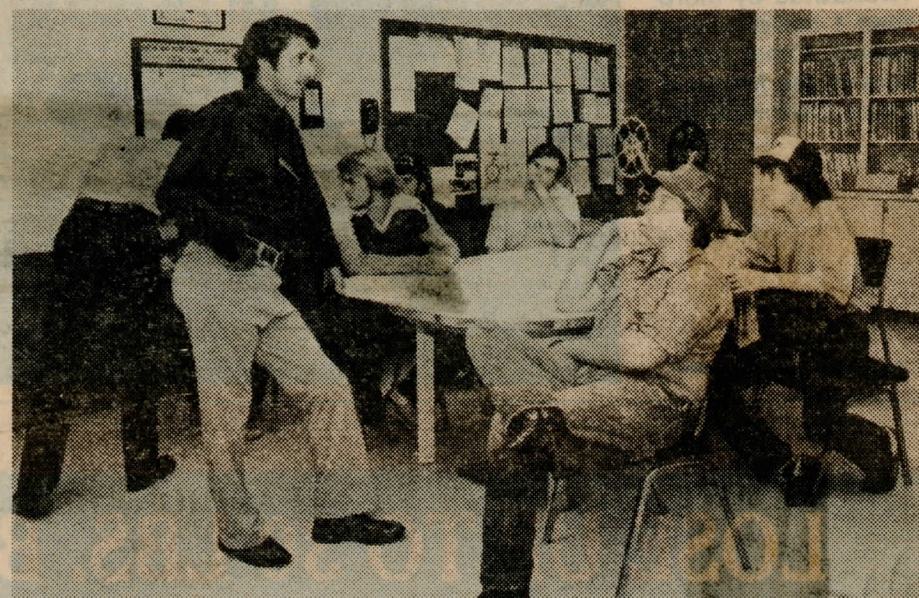
Their indoctrination to the firefighting program will be more in-depth than simply learning how to hook a fire hose to a hydrant.

But their experience won't be all work, Molthop said. For a change of pace, youngsters will take field trips, meet with other Explorers and tour the Florida State Fire College.

Persons interested in joining Explorers may call the fire department for more information. To be eligible, youngsters must be at least 14 years old and in the ninth grade and no older than 21.

Barry Kelly, 15, of Orlando, said he plans to go into some facet of the medical field and experience gained from Explorers "will help my career."

Benevides, who is also an Explorer



Judy Watson/the little sentinel

Molthop talks to Explorers before showing firefighter film.

with the city's police department, said she wanted to observe the working relationships between the two departments.

Adams, who admits his interest in firefighting is second to flying, said he would strive to be a strong captain for the group:

"I will set a good example for everyone," said Adams, who at 17 is knowl-

edgeable about the fire service operation. "I will show them it's just as hard to take orders as it is to give them."

Explorers did catch a firsthand look at the firefighters in action. As Thursday's session ended, firefighters responded to a fire call.

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