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'Just Yell Fire' self-defense class to be held in West Des Moines

Katherine Klingseis, Des Moines Register

Amanda Kruse mixes discussion with techniques to teach Des Moines-area adults and teens how to prevent violence and how to defend themselves when violence does occur.

"I hope they would go away knowing they can deter violent situations, they can get out of bad relationships, they can prevent getting into bad relationships," said Kruse, 39, of Adel.

I also hope they can be empowered and, if they do get in violent situations, they know they can defend themselves. I don't want them to doubt that."

Kruse, the owner and instructor at Des Moines Area Self-Defense, will teach a Just Yell Fire class for 11 to 18-year-olds Tuesday in West Des Moines. The class will be held 6 to 8:30 p.m. at McLaren's Resthaven Chapel, 801 19th St.

Just Yell Fire – named after the program's self-defense technique to yell "fire" to grab witnesses' attention – is a not-for-profit organization that aims to combat violence against young women. According to its website, the

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— Amanda Kruse
Owner / Instructor
Des Moines Area Self-Defense

organization "has grown into a 1.5 million girl revolution across 64 countries" since 2006.

Kruse began putting together a self-defense class after witnessing a young man asking some 10-year-old girls, including her daughter, their names and if he could take a picture of them on a bus in Des Moines in 2012.

She had to break up the conversation, and realized the girls

did not know how to react to the potentially dangerous situation, she said.

Kruse learned about Just Yell Fire, and she traveled to Florida to become trained by Chad Von Dette, a United States Martial Arts Hall of Fame inductee, in February.

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program is not only does it teach simple but highly effective techniques... it also addresses other issues affecting teenagers, especially teenage girls," Kruse said.

Kruse, who has a brown belt in Taekwondo and college degrees in sociology, psychology and social work, began teaching women's self-defense classes in April. She then started holding Just Yell Fire classes in May.

The Just Yell Fire classes will be split equally between discussions and self-defense techniques, Kruse said. Participants will also leave with a bookmark, date rape drug testing coaster, training DVD and educational booklet.

Males and females are both welcomed at Kruse's Just Yell Fire classes. Kruse said the discussions and techniques are applicable to both sexes. ■