

Two Vancouver, Washington teenagers are teaching their peers how to “fight like girls” and put a stop to date rape

by Corwin Haeck

Two Vancouver, Washington teenagers are teaching their peers how to "fight like girls" and put a stop to date rape.

Their 45 minute self-defense film "Just Yell Fire" began as a school project, and now is getting national attention.

Dallas Jessup, at age 14, is a Tae Kwon Do black belt. When her friends kept asking her for self-defense tips, she realized most girls had no idea how to protect themselves.

Dallas enlisted the help of her best friend Catherine Wehage, 15, and then approached Chad Von Dette, an instructor in Filipino street fighting, for technical advice.

The script advises teens to kick, yell, poke eyes, and otherwise "fight like girls" against would-be attackers for as long as it takes to get away.

Soon, the little school video became big time. Portland area filmmakers donated their talents to the project. Then Catherine's cousin, a set manager on ABC-TV's "Lost," enlisted some big-name help.

"We got Evangeline Lilly and Josh Holloway to play a little part," Catherine says. Lilly and Holloway play "Kate" and "Sawyer" on the hit show.

In the end, "Just Yell Fire" attracted volunteer hours worth a half-million dollars. Dallas and Catherine, however, are giving the film away for nothing

"As soon as we get more DVDs, we're going to schools and just distributing them to everybody for free," Dallas says. ■