

Sandy High female students attend self-defense session

by Stuart Tomlinson

All of Sandy High School's 750 female students will take a self-defense class Wednesday at the school, courtesy of three Sandy businesses.

The students will learn techniques designed specifically for 11- to 19-year-old girls and women by two St. Mary's Academy students.

Dallas Jessup and Catherine Wehage, both 15-year-old sophomores at St. Mary's, created the "Just Yell Fire" program and accompanying DVD to fulfill their community service requirements at the school.

Jessup's mother, Maggie Jessup, said her daughter -- who has a black belt in tae kwon do -- was inspired to develop the program after seeing video from a surveillance camera that captured the 2004 abduction of 14-year-old Carlie Brucia in Sarasota, Fla. Brucia was murdered.

"She said, 'Mom, I could have shown her how to get away,'" Jessup recalled. "It grew from there."

A crew of 30 worked on the DVD, including the actors Josh Holloway and Evangeline Lilly from the TV show "Lost."

Jessup said participants will learn

how "a 100-pound girl can bite, yell, eye gouge, and groin slap away from any bad situation, including against a 250-pound attacker."

The program has been featured on Fox National News, InTouch Weekly magazine and the "Montel Williams Show." Jessup said her daughter and Wehage will be featured on cable TVs "Fox News Live" this morning at 8 a.m.

The program can be downloaded for free at justyellfire.com. DVDs are also mailed out for free, but donations are encouraged, Jessup said, to help pay for shipping. So far, 97,000 people have downloaded the program, and 15,000 have ordered the DVD.

The cost of supplying each of the 750 Sandy High students with the DVD -- \$1 apiece -- is being paid for by Celtic Spirit Yoga, Windermere Sandy Real Estate, and Kurt & Michelle Winner, wedding officiants. ■