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Red Cross training the babysitters of the future

BY KATELYN FARAGO
MADISONCHATHAM THIS WEEK
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Diane Moore of Madison had no interest in babysitting when her Girl Scout troop signed up for the American Red Cross' babysitter's training course.

Diane, 11, said she was intimidated by the responsibility. But after completing the course, she said she now feels confident enough to try it — at least in a few years.

"It was fun," she said, explaining that she learned basic first aid, and what to do in an emergency.

The course, held Nov. 6 at the American Red Cross' Madison chapter house, covered everything from how to pick up an infant or warm a bottle, to performing rescue breaths on an unconscious child.

Diane's mother, the leader of Girl Scout Troop 1113, said she thought the babysitter's training was "an important part of learning to take care of oneself and others."

The Colonial Crossroads chapter of the American Red Cross, which serves the communities of Madison and Chatham among others, offers at least two open and two private babysitter's training classes each month. Leigh Pafford, the chapter's sales and marketing coordinator, said the full-day course costs \$65 and covers a range of topics, including basic child care, basic first aid, indentifying when it's time to call 9-1-1, and learning how to run a babysitting business.

Participants even learn how to write a resume and how to conduct themselves during an interview. Class sizes vary, but there is always at least one instructor for every 10 participants, according to Pafford.

During the spring and summer breaks, the chapter also offers a four-day babysitter's camp that includes the full first aid certification, the full CPR certification for children and infants, and a session of pet first aid. The cost is \$135.

For more information:

About the babysitter's training course offered through the Red Cross, call the Madison chapter house at 973-377-0455.

On Nov. 6, the local chapter of the Red Cross held two separate babysitter's training courses — one at the chapter house in Madison for Girl Scout Troop 1113 and an open enrollment class at Knowledge Points in Florham Park.

Lizzie Tamburro, 12, of Madison was one of the students at the Florham Park class. She said she has been mother's helper for a while but would like to start babysitting to help her neighbors out and save some money for a car. She decided to get certified because she wanted to feel prepared in the case of an emergency, she said.

"I think it's a really good opportunity," she said.

Hunter Stusnick, 14, of Chatham also attended the Florham Park class. He said he is interested in babysitting because he would like to save some money for a surf board. During the class, he said he learned how to pick up a baby correctly and change a diaper.

Pauline Figarelli, 12, of Madison took the babysitter's training course with Girls Scout Troop 1113. She said she is eager to babysit because she is good with children. But, unfortunately, she has never been particularly good at dealing with emergencies.

"I think I would be now," she said, explaining that the class taught her how to stay calm in a stressful situation.

Fellow Girl Scout Olivia Schneider, 11, of Madison said she too feels more confident about babysitting after taking the class and learning how to perform rescue breaths. She has been babysitting for a while now, and plans to use many of the techniques she learned during the course on the job.

When asked why she decided to enroll, she said simply: "I wanted to become a real, certified babysitter." For more information about the babysitter's training course offered through the Red Cross, call the Madison chapter house at 973-377-0455.

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