

## Abduction Prompts Girl to Fight Back For All Women

By Faiza Elmasry

Surveillance footage of an 11 year old's abduction motivated Dallas Jessup, who was 13 at the time, to do something to help stop sexual assault and violence against girls.

She founded "Just Yell Fire," a nonprofit which teaches self-defense skills to girls. Seven years later, Jessup has grown and so have her efforts.

Jessup produced "Just Yell Fire," a self-defense video for high school girls, in 2006.

Last summer, she produced a second film for college women highlighting the dangers on campus and focusing



Dallas Jessup, founder of Just Yell Fire, in her Tae Kwon Do Black Belt.

“Any girl anywhere in the world can watch for under an hour, for free, how to get herself out of a situation.”

— Dallas Jessup  
*Founder,  
Just Yell Fire*

on ways to prevent and escape date abuse, sexual assault or violence.

“Any girl anywhere in the world can watch for under an hour, for free how to get herself out of a situation,” Jessup says.

The way to get out of a situation, she advises, is not to stay and fight, but try to disable the attacker for just a few seconds so you can run. Bite him, gouge him in the eye, or simply yell “Fire” to get someone’s attention. She says, unfortunately, people often ignore a call for help and are reluctant to get involved if they hear a girl scream “Rape!”

Jessup, who has a black belt in Tae Kwon Do, says the two films exemplify the mission of "Just Yell Fire," which is empowering young women.

“We’re also going to schools, shelters in local areas to make sure girls work one on one with us,” she says, “make sure they can understand the techniques and really do them in real life.”

To keep spreading the word, Jessup has begun a 'train a trainer' program.

“We bring leaders in the community to certify them in the "Just Yell Fire" program, so that they then can

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

continue in their community and keep girls safe,” she says.

"Just Yell Fire" now has a presence in 65 countries. Last year Jessup traveled to India where the Vanderbilt University senior spent two weeks speaking at a dozen colleges on how to avoid slave traders and sex trafficking.

Jessup has testified before Congress and her efforts have been recognized by a number of organizations.

Most recently, in October 2012, she received the World of Children Award as a social change-maker, transforming the lives of the world's most vulnerable children.

Preventing violence against women is a social change Jessup plans to keep pursuing as long as there is a need for it. ■