

Acton citizens warned to not be victims

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
 "Don't be a victim."

That is the key survival advice Robert Pelletier offers to people who sign up for his Simply Defense classes that he operates from his Rockwood home.

"What you must do is learn a form of defense and learn how to deal with your fears and inhibitions, and that's the only way you will be able to survive an assault."

Pelletier, a burly former Olympic boxer and cop, got into self-defense training 12 years ago when some Edmonton nurses asked for safety tips and he couldn't find anyone to teach them self-defense.

Since then Pelletier has expanded his business to include training for children, seniors and women.

Pelletier teaches that prevention is a major part of survival.

"We help people create a game plan in their own mind about how they would respond in a dangerous situation. It is too late when you are right in the middle of it. Seventy-five per cent of the program is on the mental aspect of self-defense and 25 per cent focuses on the physical skills needed to survive."

Pelletier is currently teaching self-defense at Oakville's Appleby College and is talking with the local boards of education about instruction for students.

"Our children's programs are highly specialized and geared to their age and level of maturity dealing with fear," Pelletier explained in an interview Wednesday.

"It's important to not scare young kids but we teach a whole streetproofing program, including strategies to escape to safety. We teach children to respect adults but

we also need to give them the right to protect themselves."

Pelletier also has classes for seniors who are often easy marks.

"Anybody that appears to be a victim because of their age or a physical condition could be preyed on by attackers. Most seniors don't believe they are strong enough to fend off an attacker so a lot of it is a psychological thing.

"We show them effective techniques based on the element of surprise. We empower them with the strength they don't know they have."

Pelletier said people must also learn to recognize their best survival tool. "Your mind is your greatest weapon. If you are approached by someone with a weapon and all they want is your wallet or purse, then give it to them. Never fight back, it's not worth it. But if you give them what they want and they still keep coming then you must defend yourself."

For more information on Simply Defense call 856-9610.



TAKE THAT! Rockwood's Robert Pelletier of Simply Defense shows Tanner staff member Sonya Griffin how to: (top photo) prevent an attacker from cutting off her air supply and (bottom photo) how to disable an attacker with a knee to the groin, in a self-defense demonstration Thursday. Pelletier offers self-defense classes for women, men, children and seniors at his Rockwood home. (Frances Niblock photo)



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