

# A School for Heroes

Most students spend their school days sitting at desks learning. Aurelious Woolfolk, however, does a lot more than sit at a desk when he is in school. He scrambles up high ladders, walks down the sides of buildings, and rides in a fire engine. He is learning to be a firefighter at the New Haven Fire Academy.

## Fire School

Woolfolk and 28 other students are currently learning what it takes to become a firefighter. Classes at the fire academy, which is in Connecticut, last for about 22 weeks. On most days, the students go to school from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. However, once a week, school lasts until 10 p.m.

For two days each week, the students sit in a classroom to learn science, math, and emergency medicine. They learn the science of fires, how to calculate water pressure, and how to treat medical emergencies.

During the other three days, the students go outside and learn how to hook hoses to fire hydrants, climb buildings, rescue people trapped in burning buildings, and many other things.

"Firefighters have to know lots of different things," said Pablo Menendez, an instructor at the school. "We have to treat medical emergencies, know how to handle dangerous chemicals, and rescue people who have fallen from cliffs."

Teamwork is one of the most important lessons students learn at the school. "Working together saves lives," said Capt. William Seward, the director of the academy. "Students need to learn that they are part of a team."

## The Heat's On

Fighting fires is not easy. The suits and equipment a firefighter wears weigh about 40 pounds.

Firefighters are very busy. In New Haven, they respond to 32,000 emergency calls a year. Each time firefighters go out, they know they might not come back. Across the United States, about 100 firefighters die each year.

"That's why the lessons learned here at the academy are so important," said Seward. "What they learn here can save their lives."

Firefighters know how dangerous their jobs are. Their training helps them overcome their fear of heights and fires. "When you're up there on the ladder looking down, it's scary," said one student. "To do this job, you've got to wipe out the fear."

Firefighters overcome their fear for one reason. "I wanted to help other people," said Leah Harwin. "I think it is important to help other people whenever you can."