Phoenix Firecamp is an inclusive program for teenage girls to explore opportunities for women in fire and emergency services. Conducted annually during the third full week of July at the Utica Fire Academy, Phoenix Firecamp is the first such program in the Northeast.

Campers Phoenix Firecamp applications do not need any prior experience with the fire service. The majority of the attendees live in New York State, but residents of other states may attend. Up to 24 campers are selected annually for this once in a lifetime opportunity.

Staff
The instructors and team leaders are all experienced female members of career and volunteer fire departments in New York State and elsewhere, who donate their time and pay their own travel and lodging expenses. These dedicated female firefighters want to instill the concept that women have the opportunity to pursue active roles in public service and to give campers a chance to explore these possibilities. The ratio of staff to campers is one-to-one. Should a camper decide this is an area of interest, the staff provides direction, guidance and the basic tools to succeed. Many Phoenix graduates stay in touch with their instructors and team leaders via email.

The Utica Fire Department supports the camp with apparatus, equipment, lodging, training sites, EMS coverage, personnel and logistics. Westmoreland Volunteer Fire Department donates transportation, hosts social events, secures area business support and coordinates the participation of other volunteer fire departments. The Frankfort Fire Department contributes its mobile flashover simulator for forcible entry and search and rescue exercises.

Fire Service Women of New York State, Inc. (FSWNYS) is a non-profit membership organization of women involved in career and volunteer fire and emergency services from throughout New York and other states. The concept of FSWNYs arose in 2002 during the first annual training weekend for women firefighters held at the NYS Academy of Fire Science under the auspices of the NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control; never before had New York career and volunteer women come together for training and socializing. It was such an enriching, empowering experience that the women decided to form a group dedicated to the needs, interests and aspirations of female firefighters—then and into the future.

Membership is open to all who support the goals of FSWNYs. Membership is open to all who support the goals of FSWNYs.

Fire Service Women of New York State, Inc. (FSWNYS) was incorporated September 10, 2004 as a not-for-profit corporation 501(c)(3) under the laws of New York and was granted tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service from that date. It is governed by a twelve-member board of directors elected at large by the membership at the annual meeting. The board elects the officers and may, at its discretion, appoint individuals to serve in a non-voting advisory board capacity.

Financial support comes solely from membership dues, contributions and fundraising events.

To qualify, candidates must:
- Be in good physical condition
- Be covered by medical insurance
- Be 14 to 19 years of age
- Have a positive attitude
- Complete the application
- Write a 500 word essay
- Agree to follow all rules and regulations
- Participate in all activities and classes
- Submit materials by May 1st deadline

Our Mission:
- To encourage the participation of women in fire service of the State of New York
- To disseminate pertinent fire service information to the members
- To provide a supportive and encouraging environment for women in the fire service
- To hold an annual training weekend for fire service personnel
- To annually hold Phoenix Firecamp, a week-long residential firematic camp for teenage girls.
Phoenix Firecamp

Phoenix Firecamp offers an authentic experience in the life of a firefighter because campers are housed at the Utica Fire Academy, a former firehouse. They share a large bunk room and are responsible for making their beds, keeping belongings in order and doing housekeeping chores, such as sweeping and dishes.

Meals are a highlight; the food is ample, varied, nutritious and prepared by a professional chef who is hired for the week.

The day begins at 6 a.m. and lights-out comes at 10:30 p.m. Personal time for relaxation is built into the program. In the course of the week, many new friendships blossom. Campers say that getting to know girls from different backgrounds is one of Phoenix’s greatest experiences.

“I made friends for a lifetime.”

Curriculum

The classroom and hands-on curriculum, an abbreviated version of a recruit class, introduces campers to basic aspects of fire and emergency services. Exercises include:

- Donning gear
- Use of SCBA (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus)
- Search and rescue skills
- Basics of engine/ladder company operations
- Aerial ladder climb
- Auto extrication and disentanglement
- Peaked roof ventilation
- Portable ladders
- Forkable entry
- CPAT Familiarization
- Tools, ropes and knots
- Snorkel operations
- Nozzles/fitting/hydrants
- Standpipe/rose/roll/fluid
- Medical scenarios
- Ambulance familiarization
- Fire behavior/fire safety
- Introduction to hazardous materials
- PT classes and fitness information
- CPR training and certification

Phoenix Firecamp was created by Fire Service Women of New York State, Inc (FSWNYS), a non-profit, statewide association of women who are members of career and volunteer fire departments. A primary mission of the organization is encouraging young women to become involved in fire and emergency services, either as a career or as a community volunteer.

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I learned that I am capable of doing tasks that I didn’t think I had the strength to do.