

# Excellence Award Secondary



## *Erin Fluharty*

Public Safety/Protective Services Program

Traverse Bay ISD Career-Tech Center

Traverse City West High School

Nominator: Mr. Thomas M. Lennox, Program Instructor

Erin is an active person and cannot imagine sitting at a desk. She also likes to help people in need and feels that a career in the Public Safety field is a good fit for her.

In addition to her classroom work, where she has learned about both firefighting and law enforcement, Erin has had the opportunity to ride along with the Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department. She has participated in training in truck operations and ice rescue. She especially enjoys the opportunities to respond to calls when she is allowed.

Erin notes that one of the challenges of being in a nontraditional career is being in a station filled with guys. She notes that their jokes and sense of humor are “different”. She has learned that you need to be open-minded and not take some of the things they say personally.



Another challenge for women in firefighting is that it takes a great deal of upper body strength to use large equipment such as the Jaws of Life, sledge hammers, and axes. There are also a lot of tools that females need to learn how to use that males may have had prior experience with. As Erin notes, there are physically and metaphorically “big fire boots” to fill.

She is especially appreciative of the support and help she has received from the Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department firefighters. They have pushed her to continue and are patient with answering her questions and helping her to learn as much as possible about the equipment, rigs, and procedures. She also appreciates their good natured teasing about becoming a firefighter and their interest in her school success.

Erin has been elected to the National Technical Honor Society and is the Public Safety representative on the Center Student Council. She has been involved in volunteer projects like adopt a family and making blankets for the local fire department. Erin is the public relations officer for Key Club and a member of National Honor Society.

Erin’s nomination for this award is enthusiastically supported by the officers and firefighters of the Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department.

Erin plans to pursue a career in firefighting.

**B**eing a woman in a male dominated career is always a challenge.

~ Erin Fluharty