



PHOTOS BY STEVE FFOST

Youth Academy ended Friday for 40 trainees, including Erik Corrigan, 17, of North Babylon, with an obstacle course and other tests.

SCPD course for teens

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Dropping to a knee, Nick Maggio snapped handcuffs onto the teenage boy beneath him.

Maggio, wearing a bulletproof vest, looked up after hearing the final click of the cuffs.

"1:47," an instructor called out. It was a top time for the obstacle course — one of the final tests for trainees in the Suffolk County Police Department Youth Academy.

The muscular 17-year-old, a senior at William Floyd High School, jumped up to cheers in the Suffolk County Community College gymnasium. "Ooh-rah!" he yelled, dishing out high fives and fist bumps to everyone in arm's reach.

Maggio is one of 40 high school students who graduated Friday night from the academy, a weeklong primer for Suffolk teenagers interested in law en-

forcement. The ceremony was held at the college's Brentwood campus.

Trainees, mostly seniors, completed a five-day crash course in police work, including introductions to self-defense, basic law and the department's SWAT, aviation and canine operations.

Maggio — a Mastic Beach native who plans to study at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in Manhattan next year — said the academy is an easy way "to better my chances of becoming a police officer when I grow up."

In its fifth year, the program is a condensed version of the department's professional academy, said Officer Mitch Savino, program coordinator. More than 100 students applied for the summer program, one of two the department hosts each year.

"These are honors students and ROTC students," he said. "We want them to serve as ex-



Raymond Ellis, 17, of Riverhead, during Friday's obstacle course at SCCC in Brentwood.

amples."

Quincy Lewter — one of 12 girls in this summer's class — said the program helped narrow her law enforcement interests to detective work.

"I like to piece together information like a puzzle," said Lewter, 17, whose father is a retired state trooper.

Along with physical training,

lectures on various types of crime and driving practice, trainees were introduced to crime scene investigation.

Jonathan Valdez, a Brentwood High senior who loves biology and chemistry, said the program piqued his interest in forensics. "I want to be more than a police officer," Valdez, 16, said.

Ten past graduates now work as counselors for the program, helping ease trainees' transition to police academy discipline.

Before Friday's obstacle course, students — dressed in white shirts and gray shorts subject to inspection — lined up in formation and marched doubletime through the hallways.

"Your hair goes up and your makeup comes off," said DeAnna Glynn, a second-year counselor and Farmingdale State College freshman. "By the end of the course, they [trainees] don't want to do push-ups anymore."