

Our Turn To Learn...About Working Together for Juveniles



Challenge Academy

M.G. MacLauren, Colonel (Retired)

Friday, September 29, 2006
8:30 am

The Challenge Academy – An Option for Wisconsin’s “At-Risk” Youth

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Attendees will receive an updated briefing on the Challenge Academy, now in its 8th year of operation. The program is designed for “at risk” youth who are not destined to graduate with their Senior Class. The Challenge Academy is a 17-month, limited enrollment, voluntary program for youth ages 16 years, 9 months through 18 years. The youth may have been expelled, dropped out of school or as a result of truancy issues and a lack of motivation, find themselves over 1 year behind in credits. Candidates selected to attend must pass 8 Core Components plus an intense Character Development curriculum. While in attendance, the candidate, with the assistance of the staff, prepares a Post-Residential Action Plan for execution upon graduation from the 5-½ month Residential Phase. The candidate must choose to pursue employment, education, military or any combination of the 3 choices. This session will provide the background information necessary for attendees to have a basic understanding of the Challenge Academy and how it is a useful resource for them in their professions.

M.G. MacLaren, Colonel (Retired) is Director of the Wisconsin Challenge Academy; Graduate of US Military Academy – West Point - BS Engineering; 26 years of Active Military Service in the United States Army; MS Industrial Relations from Purdue University; MA National Security from Naval War College.



Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy

PROGRAM FACT SHEET

• BACKGROUND:

- Nationwide: 82% of prisoners lack a HS diploma; HS drop-outs are five times less likely to have a job, and if they do, will earn 50% less over their lifetimes; jobs available to HS drop-outs are the slowest growing and the poorest paying in the economy.
- For School Year 03-04 WI DPI reports 4,407 (1.06%), drop-outs and 45,494 (15.7%) habitual truants in grades 9-12.
- USDoJ reports that allowing one youth to drop-out of school to begin a lifetime of crime and drug abuse will cost society \$1.7M-\$2.3M over their lifetime.
- USDoEd reports:
 - 33 million 16-24 year olds do not have a HS degree, resulting in rising juvenile delinquency and crime, and contributing to the fact that 30% of them are on some form of federal assistance.
 - 3.8 million youths 16-24 who are neither in school or employed (that includes college graduates); that number has increased 700K (19%) in the last three years.
- The National Guard's Youth Challenge Program is designed to take selected *at-risk* youth and to intervene early enough to prevent drug use and criminal behavior from becoming a life-style.
- Program costs are shared by federal and state governments and currently funded in 26 states and Puerto Rico.

- **OUR MISSION:** *To offer our Cadets the opportunity to develop the strength of character and the life-skills necessary to become successful, responsible citizens.*

- **THE PROGRAM:** a 17-month program divided into two phases –

- **Residential Phase:** 5 1/2-month long; high impact; quasi-military environment; conducted at Fort McCoy.
 - Focuses on Eight Core Components
 - Academic Excellence
 - Job Skills
 - Physical Fitness
 - Leadership/Followership
 - Health, Hygiene, and Nutrition
 - Life-Coping Skills
 - Responsible Citizenship/Character Development
 - Service to the Community
- **Post-Residential Phase:** 12 months following graduation; provides a carefully selected, trained mentor; requires weekly contact and monthly reports; Cadets must be:
 - Enrolled in high school or HSED program (if not attaining HSED while at the Academy)
 - Enrolled in a trade or vocational school
 - Enrolled and employed part-time
 - Enrolled in post-secondary school
 - Employed full-time or in military service

• ENTRANCE CRITERIA:

- Must be a volunteer
- 16 years, 9 months through 18 years of age on class start date
- High school drop-out or habitual truant, or cannot graduate with class
- Not currently on parole or probation for other than juvenile-status offenses, not awaiting sentencing, and not under indictment, charged, or convicted of a felony
- Drug-free; smoke-free
- US citizen or legal resident of US and resident of WI
- Mentally and physically capable of program participation
- Demonstrates a strong desire to change



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- **HOW TO CONTACT US:**

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