PARENT HANDBOOK

“EMBRACE THE CHALLENGE”
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Dear Parent(s) and/or Guardian(s)

I welcome you to the District of Columbia Capital Guardian Youth ChalleNGe Academy, and I thank you for the opportunity to work with your son or daughter in their effort to change the direction of his/her life. Since its inception in 1993, the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program has been committed to graduating leaders with exemplary character, discipline and a high level of integrity. Your young adult’s time here will provide her/him access to educational and employment opportunities for the future, paired with outstanding leadership training, which will allow them to accomplish their goals.

I applaud you and your young adult for choosing a path less traveled. Whether their desire is to go to college, attend a trade school, enter the work force, or join the military, the lessons learned as a CGYCA Cadet will outfit them for a future career. Never let your son or daughter forget why they chose or needed to choose to enroll in the Capital Guardian Youth ChalleNGe Academy, or to lose sight of their end goal. Always remind them that their experiences and education is directly related to the amount of work they personally put into their own advancement.

Know that your young man or woman’s challenge experience began the moment they arrived. A hand selected and exceptional team will provide them with all the instruction needed for them to grow and develop into a leader with integrity and discipline. Their assigned Cadre Team Leader will ensure that they receive training of the highest caliber and see to it that they make a successful transition from civilian life to Cadet Life.

Once again, I congratulate and thank you on your decision to support your child in taking the steps to change the direction of his/her life. You are now a parent/guardian of a member of the current class of the Corps of Cadets. Who are beginning a program of instruction that will offer them new opportunities for their future and a unique experience that will provide memories and friends that will last a lifetime? When writing or speaking with your Cadet constantly encourage her/him to work hard, stay focused, and strive to excel, so that they can be successful.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Raymond A. Blackwell
Capital Guardian Youth ChalleNGe Academy
Director

3201 Oak Hill Drive, Laurel Maryland 20724
202-730-1533 • Fax 202-730-1532
“Embrace The ChalleNGe”
District of Columbia
Capital Guardian Youth ChallengeGe Academy
Mission and Vision Statement

**CHALLENGE MISSION**

To provide opportunities for personal growth self-improvement and academic achievement among District of Columbia high school dropouts, teens no longer attending and those failing in school, through a highly structured military styled, non-traditional educational environment; integrating training, mentoring, tough love and diverse educational and extracurricular activities.

**CHALLENGE VISION**

To be one of the District of Columbia’s leaders and premier youth programs serving high school drop outs and those who are not likely to succeed in the traditional high school system, while creating economic value, long term cost avoidance, civic contribution and future responsible tax paying citizens of the District of Columbia.

Parenting Thought:
You can lead a horse to water and you can't make him drink—but you can sure make him thirsty!
SECTION I

GENERAL GUIDANCE & FINANCIAL

WHAT TO EXPECT
Welcome to the Capital Guardian Youth ChalleNGe Academy. The purpose of the ChalleNGe Academy is to encourage and guide young men and women to make the necessary changes in their lives and to accept responsibility for preparing for the future. As the title suggests, the “ChalleNGe” Academy will indeed challenge your young adult to grow emotionally and physically. As your child progresses through the Academy, you will notice subtle changes in his/her self-esteem and confidence level. We ask for your support as your young adult goes through these changes. The handbook will serve to answer some questions or concerns you may have regarding your child. You are encouraged to call the Commandant with any additional questions.

ACCLIMATION PHASE
The Acclimation Phase consists of the first two weeks of the residential phase. Please keep in mind that different rules apply during the Acclimation phase than during the residential phase.

The first two weeks are challenging. All candidates are closely monitored and are evaluated daily. Candidates are challenged in the following areas: handling stress, following procedures, motivation and adapting to the day to day regiment of the academy. During this period, candidates who consistently exhibit negative behavior will be subjected to a corrective action to correct their deficiencies. At the end of the second week, each candidate will be evaluated by a board to address their strengths and weaknesses. Candidates failing to adapt to the regiment of the program may be subjected to disenrollment.

Once the candidate has completed all requirements of the acclimation phase, they will be permitted to crossover, and at that point be promoted to Cadet status.

HOURS OF OPERATION
The Academies normal business Hours of Operation for administrative support, is 0730 to 1700, Monday through Friday. And our Cadre team is present 24 hours a day, 7 days a week during the class cycle, to include federal and district holidays, with the exception of Memorial Day and Thanksgiving, during which the Cadets will be granted a pass not to exceed 5 days.

MAILING ADDRESS
It is strongly encouraged that you write to your Cadet daily. Cadets that receive daily letters, cards, and/or care packages prove to be more successful during this very challenging period of their life. We recommend if you haven’t done so already to put a card or letter in the mail today!

All mail for Candidates/Cadets should be addressed as follows:

Capital Guardian Youth ChalleNGe Academy
Attn: Cadet _____________ Class: ______ Platoon: ____
3201 Oak Hill Drive
Laurel, MD 20724
FUNDS
- Tuition is free to those accepted in the program, parents/guardians are NOT required to pay tuition or other costs associated with the overall operations of the Capital Guardian Youth Challenge Academy (CGYCA).
- CGYCA or its staff will not be responsible for “holding money”, cashing personal checks, or advancing money to any Candidate/Cadet. **DO NOT SEND MONEY WITH OR TO YOUR CHILD**
- A Cadet or his/her parent(s) or guardian(s) may be required to cover the cost for the repair and/or replacement of any CGYCA property intentionally damaged by the Cadet. Payment will be made directly to the Government of the District of Columbia. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the program, and possible legal actions.

RECREATION AND WEEKEND ACTIVITIES
Most weekends will include group activities and field trips, which will be planned and conducted based on availability of funding. Such activities may consist of military type training (rope, confidence, and obstacle courses), bowling, roller skating, and sporting events. The privilege to participate will be withheld from Cadets who display negative performance.

SECTION II

HEALTH CARE
- The Academies Medical Clinic is managed by Unity Health Care and is opened Monday through Friday from 0800 to 1600 to treat minor illnesses and injuries. Medical conditions that require additional attention or treatment not available on campus will be referred out to the patient’s primary care provider or to one of Unity’s community based clinics in the District of Columbia. Serious medical emergencies will be referred to Laurel General Hospital, and if necessary via the use of Anne Arundel County Emergency Services. Laurel General Hospital is located at 7300 Van Dusen Rd, Laurel, MD 20707, there phone is (301) 725-4300.
- While any and all treatment provided by Unity Health Care at the campus is at on cost to you, CGYCA and/or its staff **WILL NOT** be responsible for the any cost associated with additional medical or health care services to include charges for doctor or hospital visits, clinical testing, or the cost for prescription or other medications. This includes any co-pays required by the patient’s medical insurance plan. You have the parent/guardian are required to provide a copy of your child’s current medical insurance card, and must guarantee all payments for required medical treatment and services, this includes any and all expenses not covered by your health insurance provider.
- We strongly encourage your involvement when a medical issue with your son or daughter arises. **If warranted,** after your cadet as been see in the clinic, you will be contacted by medical provider, and advised of your cadets medical condition.
- Please be advised that **Cadet absences from the academy for ANY reason to include medical appointments are strictly controlled. Therefore all medical appointments to include dental and vision must be coordinated and approved by the CGYCA medical support team.** You are asked to reframe for making any medical appointment solely based on a request from your Cadet, please communicate all medical requirements with the Unity Clinic at CGYCA. In the event you must take your Cadet to your primary care provider, you will be required to make the appointment and provide round trip transportation, that will ensure that your Cadet is able to make the appointment and return to the academy within the same day, generally the Cadet will not be off campus for more than 6 hours.
• At anytime you must make a medical appointment, you are asked to notify the Unity Health Care Clinic at the academy at least one week prior to the scheduled appointment date. Its important to note that elective treatment to include dental and vision and any other non-emergency medical/health care are not recognized by CGYCA as necessary for a Cadet to miss a day from the academy.

• In a situation in which your Cadet requires immediate medical attention, a member of the Unity Health Clinic or a member of our Cadre Team will notify you and let you know where your Cadet is to be taken for treatment.

• All medication, prescription and over the counter (OTC) must be provided by the parent/guardian. **Said medication must be turned into the Unity Health Care Team during in-processing.** Cadets will only have access to during prescribe times throughout the day, during which time a member of the Unity Health Care Team or a selected and trained member of the Cadre Team will supervise the your Cadet taking their medication(s). **Note: Cadets refusing to take their prescribe medication as directed, will be subject to dismissal from the program.**

• In the event a prescription is ordered as the result of treatment at the CGYCA Clinic or visit to a off campus facility, CGYCA Clinic Staff can coordinate pick-up at a local pharmacy or in some cases will coordinate the delivery of the medication to the academy. Full payment must be made by the parent/guardian. A member of the Unity Health Care Clinic will be available to assist with the coordination.

**SECTION III**

**VISITATION AND PASS**

• **Visitation:** Generally visitation of any kind is not allowed, in that it has been found to be a distraction to the Cadets progress. A special family day/open house will be scheduled, and you will receive an invitation will in advance of this special event. You are asked to arrange your visit to coincide with our Family Day/Open House. **Special passes such as family reunions, birthday parties, weddings, family member in town, or birth of a child etc. Are not and will not be authorized.**

• **Cadet Passes:** Cadets will be granted one pass during the class for Exodus, which will consist of not more then 5-days during the Thanksgiving or Memorial Day weekend. Details pertaining to this pass will be provided well in advance. Under no circumstance will Cadet be authorized an early departure. Departure and Return times will be strictly enforced, and the failure of a Cadet to return from pass may result in immediate dismissal from the program.

• **Homesickness:** “The distress or impairment caused by an actual or anticipated separation from home. Its cognitive hallmark is preoccupying thoughts of home and attachment objects” Which may be an problem with your Cadet. It is our hope that you and your Cadet discussions prior to the class start date and upon reporting was positive. That you kept your good-bye as brief possible, yet provided your Cadet with the knowledge that the family is very proud of them for taking on such a big challenge. You are ask to write positive and encouraging letters at least once a week, if not every day. Hopefully you were able to write them a letter while you were waiting for your Cadet to complete in-processing.

• **Voluntary Disenrollment:** In the event your Cadet expresses a desire to be dis-enrolled from the program, he/she will be required to work thought their chain of command, to explain their decision. If necessary you will be called to arrange a formal intervention in an effort to redirect your Cadets focus. This may be via phone conference or in person. In any event Cadets waiting to be out-processed will be separated from the other Cadets.
CONDUCT AND OPERATIONS

Conduct: The Capital Guardian Youth Challenge Academy is a military style alternative educational program. As such uses a strict code of conduct to enforce policy and good discipline. Violations of this code will result in corrective action, however the Youth Challenge Program adheres to very clear hands-off policy, therefore no form of corporal punishment is used in correcting Cadets. Serious incidents of Cadet misconduct may result in dismissal from the program. Serious offenses include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Use and/or possession of illegal or other drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products
2. Use and/or possession of a weapon or explosives
3. Authorized presence in barracks of the opposite gender
4. Any sexual activity
5. Deliberate destruction, abuse, or misuse of academy property or the property of others
6. Aggressive/violent acts or threatening behavior or abusive threatening language towards academy Staff of other Cadets
7. Creating an unsafe environment (escalating negative behavior, starting a fire anywhere on campus
8. Unauthorized departure from campus

Questions Regarding Cadets: The Commandant is your point of contact for questions regarding Cadre operations which impact the performance of your Cadet. You should direct all questions regarding your Cadet to the Commandant, the Commandant is not available or able to answer your question, you will be directed to someone who will provide a response within a 24 hour period.

Telephone Calls: Your Cadet will be permitted two 5-minute telephone calls per week, beginning the end of the second week of the acclimation phase. They will have the ability to earn additional minutes based on their performance. Please note the academy does not and will not tell the your Cadet who to call. Also in that your Cadet can not receive calls, in the case of a family emergency you and/or a family member should call the CGYCA Counselor Department. It is very important that a member of our Counseling Department be present when and if your Cadet is informed of any sad or unexpected bad news. Please notify us before you notify your Cadets.

Personal Items: Personal items not listed on the packing list are strictly prohibited. CGYCA staff will not be responsible for any lost or stolen items. Your Cadet will be held accountable and/or responsible for lost or damaged CGYCA items of clothing or equipment issued to them.

Automobiles: Your Cadet is not authorized to have or operate vehicle while at the academy.

Hair: Your Cadet hair (male and female) will be neat and trim and conform to CGYCA standards, at all times. Radical styles/color is prohibited. Facial hair, mustaches, beards, goatees, etc. are not permitted.

Jewelry: Cadets may wear an inexpensive watch, No other jewelry other then that for religious prepossess are authorized.

Religious Services: Non-denominational religious services are provided on Sunday afternoon, and attendance is strictly voluntary.
Mentors: The success of your Cadet greatly depends on the support he/she may receive from their screened and trained mentor. Their mentor will be asked to commit to support them throughout the 22-weeks of the Residential Phase and to continue that support during the 12-month Post Residential Phase. The mentor will be an integral link between your Cadet and the academy staff, and will be a prime source of information regarding your Cadets progress during the post residential period. The mentor will also be a resource for your graduate and provides advice and counsel regarding school, job, or other areas that help your cadet reach his/her goals. Therefore, we ask that you work closely with your Cadet, his/her Mentor, and our Post residential Team in developing a sound “Post Residential Action Plan” to assist your Cadet in reaching their goal.

Staff Assistance: The CGYCA staff is committed to the success of your Cadet, and will assist you with questions you may have about the academy. Please don’t hesitate to call or ask..

A mentor empowers a person to see a possible future, and believe it can be obtained.
- Shawn Hitchcock
SECTION V

Curriculum

The Youth ChalleNGe Program is based on Eight Core Components, which makeup the curriculum here at CGYCA. Your Cadet will be required to successfully meet the established standards of Each of the following components.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE: As a Cadet you will attend daily academic classes to prepare you for the General Education Development (GED) Test, and/or increasing your Math and Reading Comprehension Level. Evaluation of your Math and Reading Comprehension Level progress during the Residential Phase will be measured using the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) testing process.

LEADERSHIP/FOLLOWERSHIP: Identification and application of individual moral and ethical standards is the focus of the various roles and responsibilities as you live and learn in a structured group environment.

PHYSICAL FITNESS: The Academy conducts a physical fitness program using the President's Challenge, a test battery based on data collected from a variety of sources including the 1985 President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports National School Population Fitness Survey, the Amateur Athletic Union Physical Fitness Program and the Canada Fitness Award Program.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE: A holistic approach that combines physical and mental well-being as you explore the effects of substance abuse and sexually transmitted diseases on ones physical health and well-being. You will learn the physical and emotional benefits of proper nutrition through participation in classes and structured group discussions.

LIFE-COPING SKILLS: Increased self-esteem and self-discipline are gained through a combination of classroom activities and a structured living environment. The development of individual strategies and coping mechanisms for managing personal finance and dealing with such emotions as anger, grief, frustration and stress are developed through structured group discussion and in the classroom environment.

JOB SKILLS: Career exploration is accomplished through career assessment and interest inventories, job-specific skills orientation and awareness. Specific classroom activities focus on development of individual resumes, completing job applications and preparation for, and conduct of job interviews.

RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP: The U.S. Government structure and processes, along with individual rights and responsibilities at the local, District of Columbia, state and national level are addressed in the classroom environment, in the student government process, and through practical experiences within local communities.

SERVICE TO COMMUNITY: As a Cadet you will perform a minimum of 40 hours of service to the community and/or conservation project activities as part of a group or on an individual basis. These activities provide you with additional opportunities for career exploration as well as enhancing your awareness the community-needs.
SECTION VI

POINTS OF CONTACT

Commandant (202) 730 - 1626
Lead Instructor (202) 730 - 1625
Lead Counselor (202) 730 - 1573
Administrative Office (Normal Duty Hours) (202) 730 - 1533
CGYCA Unity Health Care Clinic (202) 730 - 1533
After Normal Duty Hours (Emergencies Only) (202) 631 - 1874
Post Residential/Mentoring (202) 730 - 1599
Fax Number (202) 730 - 1532
Via Contact Us at cgyca.org

To send a general message to your Cadet via email. cadetmail@cgyca.org

Please remember Normal Duty Hours for administrative purposes are from 0800 to 1700 Monday through Friday