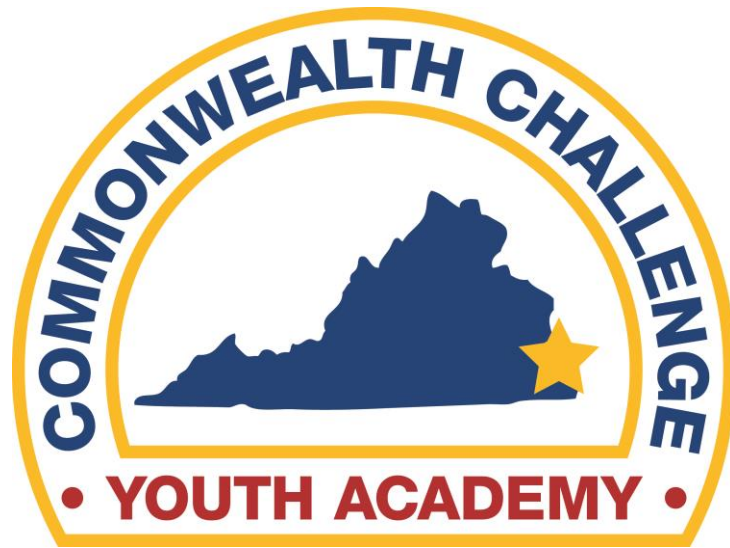


Virginia
Commonwealth Challenge
Youth Academy



Class 50

Parent/Guardian Handbook

October 2nd 2018 through March 2nd 2019

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Virginia Commonwealth ChalleNGe Youth Academy is to intervene in the lives of 16-18 year old teenagers by providing the values, skills, education, and self-discipline needed to produce responsible, productive citizens, and to do so in a highly structured learning environment.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Welcome to the ChalleNGe family and thank you for trusting us with the care of your child for the next five and a half months. The objective of the ChalleNGe program, sponsored by the Virginia National Guard, is to intervene in the lives of 16-18 year old teenagers by providing the values, skills, education, and self-discipline needed to produce responsible, productive citizens, and to do so in a highly structured learning environment.

During the residential phase of our program, the Cadets will complete the eight core components, which are: academic excellence, life coping skills, job skills, health and hygiene, responsible citizenship, service to the community, leadership/followership, and physical fitness. The Cadets will receive additional instruction in patriotism, community living, drug and alcohol abuse awareness and team building that is geared toward developing respect for both community and society. Academically, all Cadets work toward attaining their GEDs or will participate in our credit recovery curriculum so they can return to their high schools and complete their High School Diplomas.

Upon graduating from the residential phase of our program, Cadets will enter a twelve month post-residential phase where they will continue to work with their ChalleNGe career counselor and their mentor on placement opportunities. During this phase, Cadets are required to be enrolled in high school or an institution of higher education such as college or trade school, be successfully employed for 30 hours or more per week, or join the military. Both the mentor and all of the ChalleNGe staff are ready and prepared to assist the Cadets with placement.

Lastly, we look forward to working with your Cadet over the next 17 and a half months. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me or any member of the ChalleNGe staff at any time.

Sincerely,

COMMONWEALTH CHALLENGE YOUTH ACADEMY



E. Mark Chicoine
Director
Captain, USN (Ret.)

PROGRAM STAFF DIRECTORY

1-757-491-5932, ext. XXX
1-800-796-6472, ext. XXX

You can reach the ChalleNGe staff by dialing either of the above listed numbers and entering the three digit extension of the person you are trying to reach. If you do not know the extension, press 0 for the receptionist who will transfer you to the person you are trying to reach.

Director.....	E. Mark Chicoine, Ext. 221
Deputy Director.....	Richard Guzman, Ext. 226
Program Coordinator.....	Robert Laury, Ext. 225/Cell (757) 652-7393
Commandant.....	Marcus Brooks, Ext. 224
Lead Teacher.....	Mr. Kreitner, Ext. 233
Lead Counselor.....	Ms. Weaver, Ext. 239
Medical.....	Nurse, Ext. 243 or 244
Team Leader.....	Ext. 252 / Cell: (757) 536-1683
Recruitment, Placement, Mentor Manager..	Mr. N. Montgomery, Ext. 250
Admissions.....	Mr. L. Boykin, Ext. 235
Mentor Coordinator.....	Dr. Kargbo, Ext. 240
Career Counselors.....	Ext. 236, 241, 249, or 253
After Hours Cell Number.....	(757) 536-1683
Fax Number.....	(757) 491-5934
ChalleNGe Web Site.....	www.vachallenge.org
Visit us on Facebook.....	https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthChalleNGe

Normal administrative duty hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

MAILING ADDRESS

Mail for cadets should be addressed as follows for both letter mail and packages*:

Commonwealth ChalleNGe
Cadet Last Name, First Initial Plt.
253 C Street
Camp Pendleton/SMR
Virginia Beach, VA 23451-0539

*NOTE: When sending a package, we recommend that you save tracking number of the package until you verify that the package has arrived.

EMAIL

We encourage you to email your cadet at **CadetEmail@vachallenge.org**. Ensure you put your cadet's name and platoon number in the subject line. Emails will be printed and distributed to the cadets daily. You will not receive a reply as the cadets do not have access to personal email while in the program.

FINANCIAL AND GENERAL GUIDANCE

Program Cost: Parents are NOT required to pay tuition or other costs associated with Commonwealth ChalleNGe Youth Academy operations. The program is **FREE** to those who are accepted. There is a packing list of personal clothing items that the cadets are required to bring with them on the first day of class. This packing list is the only required out of pocket expense for the cadets. The packing list was mailed along with the Academy acceptance packet. If you have not received this list, please let one of our staff know.

NOTE: You may be invoiced by the State of Virginia for any destruction of state property or for lost/destroyed ChalleNGe uniform items by your Candidate/Cadet.

Social Security Card/Birth Certificate: Each cadet is required to submit a copy of his/her social security card or resident number as well as a copy of their birth certificate or passport prior to enrollment. No candidate will be enrolled without providing a copy of these documents.

Recreation/Weekend Activities: Most weekends will include group activities and/or field trips. The staff will plan and conduct these activities based on the availability of transportation, equipment and funding. Such activities may include military type training such as rope, confidence and obstacle courses, rappelling, bowling, park visits, roller skating, sporting events, etc. The privilege of participating in these planned activities may be withheld due to poor cadet performance or behavior issues.

OPERATIONS

Days at ChalleNGe. Your cadet is required to be at ChalleNGe for a **minimum of 147 days** in order to graduate. All passes and placement passes are included in the required 147 days.

**** **IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you take your cadet out on a pass or your cadet departs early or returns late from pass and it was not authorized by the Program Coordinator, then you risk **your cadet not meeting the 147 day requirement and not graduating but rather receiving a certificate of attendance.**

Parent Questions: The Commonwealth ChalleNGe Commandant is responsible for all aspects of the Teach Advise and Train (TAC) staff and operations that impact cadet life. Parents should direct questions regarding their cadets to the Program Coordinator. If the Program Coordinator is unavailable to answer a question, the Commandant, Team Leader, Counselor or TAC Officer will be assigned to do so. All questions will be answered in a timely manner. **The ChalleNGe Program Coordinator can be reached at extension 225 and the Team Leader extension is 252.**

Hours of Operations: Normal administrative duty hours in building 253 are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Team Leader is scheduled around the clock, seven days per week. After normal duty hours you may call the Team Leader at 757-491-5932, ext. 252 and follow the instructions given by voice mail, or call the ChalleNGe duty cell (757) 536-1683.

a. If you need to drop off an item for your cadet, please do so before 6:00pm Monday-Friday and Saturday and Sunday between 4:00pm -6:00pm in the Operations building T-34 located across the shed and dumpsters on B street.

HEALTH CARE

Medical staff is on site at Commonwealth ChalleNGe, Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 am. to issue medications, treat minor illnesses and injuries. More serious medical issues are referred to a local hospital. Emergency services are provided by the Virginia Beach Rescue Squad. If warranted, you will be informed of your cadet's medical condition after a visit with our medical staff. If a medical situation occurs where your child must be taken for immediate medical attention, our medical staff or Team Leader will notify you of the situation and will advise you as to where the child is being taken for treatment.

While treatment provided by our medical staff is at no cost to you, Commonwealth ChalleNGe will not pay for health care services provided outside of our clinic. Any and all charges for outside medical treatment to include doctor visits, hospital visits, clinical testing, and prescription medications will be the responsibility of the Cadet's parent or guardian.

Parents or guardians must provide their own health care insurance or guarantee payments. If your health insurance policy requires you to claim a Primary Care Physician (PCP), you must notify your PCP and ask for a referral to Patient Choice for the **duration of the program.** In some circumstances, it

may be easier to simply change your PCP to Patient Choice during the residential phase. Generally, HMOs will cooperate when informed of the residential nature of this program. Parents or guardians are responsible for co-payment costs or expenses not covered by their health insurance.

We encourage parental involvement when a medical issue arises. **Please be aware that medical appointments scheduled during the residential phase of the program are strictly controlled and it is necessary to coordinate the scheduling of the appointment with the ChalleNGe medical staff.** If your child must be seen by his/her regular physician, it is the parent or guardian's responsibility to contact the ChalleNGe medical staff at least one day in advance. Additionally, it is the parent or guardian's responsibility to provide transportation for the child both to and from the appointment. Elective treatment and non-emergency dental care are not recognized by ChalleNGe as necessary to remove your child from daily participation. You may contact our medical staff at (757) 491-5932 ext. 243 or 244 with questions or concerns you may have.

All prescription medication must be paid for and provided by the parent or guardian. All prescription and over-the-counter medicine must be turned into the medical staff during in-processing. All medications will be held by the medical staff in a locked facility. Only the medical staff or a trained TAC Officer is allowed to dispense medications to the cadets. If a prescription is ordered as the result of treatment at our contract clinic or a local hospital, our medical staff can coordinate filling the prescription at a local pharmacy; however, the parent or guardian is responsible for payment. Often times, this can be accomplished by contacting the pharmacy directly and providing credit card information for payment. For additional information or details, please contact our medical staff.

Immunizations: Parents must provide their cadet's immunization records. These forms must be submitted prior to or during in-processing at Commonwealth ChalleNGe. A current immunization for tetanus/diphtheria and TB skin test is required. Cadets will not be enrolled without these records.

VISITATION/LEAVE

Visitation: **General visitation is not normally allowed.** A special family day event will be scheduled during the residential phase of the program and parents/guardians are notified well in advance. Family members are encouraged to arrange their visits to coincide with the scheduled family day. Special passes (such as reunions, birthday parties, weddings, family member in town, births, etc.) will not normally be authorized for the cadets. Cadet pass information is explained below.

Cadet Passes: During each class, we try to plan two home passes for the cadets that coincide with a state holiday to make it a long weekend. In order to go on home pass, the cadets must be picked up by the parent or guardian only. The pass dates and pick up/drop off times and locations will be provided on the official class schedule that you will receive AND are listed as appendix a.. All cadets must be signed out prior to departure for pass by their parent or guardian or someone that has been authorized in writing by you. Upon returning to ChalleNGe at the completion of the home pass, cadets will be searched for contraband and will have a drug test performed the next day. Any cadet that is positive will be disenrolled. Cadets will NOT be allowed to depart prior to the scheduled pick up time. If you have any questions about home passes you may contact the Commonwealth ChalleNGe Commandant.

Days at ChalleNGe. Your cadet is required to be at ChalleNGe for a minimum of 147 days in order to graduate. All passes and placement passes are included in the required 147 days. Pass days are already factored into these required days.

**** **IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you take your cadet out on a pass or your cadet departs early or returns late from pass and it was not authorized by the Program Coordinator, then you risk your cadet not meeting the 147 day requirement and not graduating but rather receiving a certificate of attendance.

Homesickness: This may be a problem for some cadets. Parents/guardians can assist by being optimistic and positive about the program when talking with your cadet prior to the class start date. Also, during check in for class commencement, good-byes should be brief, yet provide the cadet with the knowledge that their families care about them. Parents/guardians can help by writing friendly encouraging letters, and sending cards, or emails to their cadet at least once a week, but more often if possible. Parents/guardians can also help by writing an initial letter or even a quick note while you are waiting for your cadet to complete in-processing. Don't forget to tell them how proud you are of them for volunteering for this program. Encourage other family members and friends to write as well, especially other members in the household such as siblings. In turn, we will encourage the cadets to write home to their families while they are here.

VOLUNTARY DISENROLLMENT

The Commonwealth ChalleNGe Youth Academy is strictly a voluntary program, we cannot keep a cadet here against their will. If a cadet wishes to voluntarily disenroll from the program, we will take the following actions:

1. The cadet will be counseled by several members in their chain of supervision to determine the reason that the cadet wishes disenroll and to see if we can encourage them to stay.
2. The parent/guardian will be contacted prior to making a final disenrollment decision.
3. If the cadet does decide to voluntarily disenroll, they will be separated from the other cadets while waiting to depart the ChalleNGe campus.

CADET CONDUCT

Commonwealth ChalleNGe Youth Academy is a program with a distinctly military look and feel. As such, it uses a strict code of conduct to enforce policy and discipline. Violations of this code will result in punitive action; however, ChalleNGe strictly enforces a hands-off policy and corporal punishment of cadets (slapping, striking, paddling, etc.) IS NOT used by the staff nor will it be tolerated. Serious incidents of cadet misconduct may result in dismissal from the program. Serious offenses include, but are not limited to:

1. Use/possession of drugs/alcohol
2. Use/possession of weapons or explosives

3. The presence of a cadet in the barracks of the opposite sex
4. Any sexual activity between cadets
5. Deliberate destruction, abuse, or misuse of program property or the property of others
6. Making threats or demonstrating actual acts of aggressive or violent behavior or the use of abusive language to other cadets or staff members
7. Creating an unsafe environment (escalating negative behavior, starting fires, etc.)
8. Unauthorized absence from the academy

CURRICULUM

While in the residential phase of the program, cadets will attend classes geared toward either credit recovery or GED preparation. In addition to these traditional educational tracks, there are eight core components of the Commonwealth ChalleNGe curriculum that the cadets are required to participate in. These are as follows:

Academic Excellence - All ChalleNGe cadets attend daily academic classes that increase math and reading comprehension and prepares them for General Education Development (GED) credential testing. Evaluation of a cadet's grade level progress during the residential phase is measured using the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) testing process. Cadets also explore the knowledge and skills required to pursue future educational opportunities. Additionally, some cadets will have the option to work on credit recovery using the Virginia Department of Education approved Edgenuity Credit Recovery Program. The cadets who enroll in the credit recovery program will return to their high schools upon graduating from ChalleNGe to continue working toward their high school diploma.

Life Coping Skills - Cadets learn skills designed to last a lifetime. Increased self-esteem and self-discipline are gained through a combination of classroom activities, group discussions, and a structured living environment. Cadets learn how to identify and self-regulate emotions such as anger, grief, frustration, and stress and how to utilize conflict resolution strategies. ChalleNGe provides the educational resources necessary to foster fiscal responsibility, helping cadets understand personal finance, basic banking, obtaining and managing good credit, and preparing and managing a personal budget.

Job Skills - Cadets prepare for long-term, gainful employment. Career exploration is accomplished through career assessment and interest inventories, job-specific skills orientation and awareness, and training in area vocational centers. Specific classroom activities focus on developing individual resumes, completing job applications, and preparing for and conducting

job interviews.

Health and Hygiene - Cadets learn the value of a healthy, well-balanced lifestyle. ChalleNGe offers a holistic approach that combines physical and mental well-being as cadets explore the effects of substance abuse and sexually transmitted diseases on their over health and well-being. Cadets learn the physical and emotional benefits of proper nutrition through participation in classes and structured group discussions.

Responsible Citizenship - Cadets discover their role in the democratic process and learn their rights, privileges, and obligations as United States citizens. The U.S. Government structure and processes, along with individual rights and responsibilities at the local, state and national level, are addressed in the classroom environment, in the student government process, and through practical experiences within local communities. Those who are eligible register for selective service and to vote.

Service to the Community - Cadets realize the value and importance of giving back to the community while performing a minimum of 40 hours of service to the community and/or conservation project activities in groups and on an individual basis. These activities provide additional opportunities for career exploration and enhance community-needs awareness in Cadets.

Leadership/Followership - Cadets develop strong character while identifying and applying individual moral and ethical standards to perform various roles and responsibilities in a structured group environment. They learn to willingly comply with established rules, regulations, and procedures; perform basic military customs and courtesies; define and recognize leadership skills, traits, dimensions, and components; employ leadership skills while performing in a leadership position; maintain a personal living area; and function as an effective team member.

Physical Fitness - Physical fitness becomes an integral part of cadet daily life. Cadets perform physical training based on 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.

Additional academic information is as follows:

1. Cadets are required to complete a Post-Residential Action Plan, also known as a "P-RAP", as a condition for graduation. The P-RAP is a tool design to assist the Cadets in staying on track with meeting their goals.

2. Cadets who are on the GED track will be enrolled in an assessment based curriculum that will help prepare them to take the GED test toward the end of the residential phase. Cadets who are taking the GED test are **required to have an official state identification card** in order to take the GED test. We highly encourage you to obtain a state identification card for your child prior to them reporting to Challenge.

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3. The faculty will provide feedback to the cadets on their classroom standing in an effort to develop a clear picture of where the student is in relation to their educational objectives and goals.

4. Cadets will be administered a series of vocational interest surveys while enrolled in Commonwealth ChalleNGe to include the military's ASVAB Test.

5. Information about taking the SAT and SAT testing dates will be available to eligible students. Please contact the career counselors for more information.

ROLE OF THE MENTOR

All candidates of the Commonwealth ChalleNGe Youth Academy are required to have a screened and trained mentor to enter the program. The mentor must commit to support the cadet during the 22 week residential phase and for at least the first 12 months of the post residential phase. Mentors are the integral link between the cadet and the ChalleNGe staff and are the prime source of information regarding cadet progress during the 12 month post residential phase. The mentor also serves as a resource for the graduate and provides advice and counsel regarding school, job, or any other area that helps the cadets in reaching their post-residential goals. We ask the parents to work closely with the cadet, mentor, and post-residential staff in developing a "Post Residential Action Plan" to assist cadets in reaching their goals.

MISCELLANEOUS

Workshop: The counselors provide a workshop for the parents/guardians to help them prepare for life after the residential phase of ChalleNGe (Post-Residential). Every effort should be made to attend the workshop.

Banquet: All cadets participate in a formal awards banquet with the staff. This is only for cadets from Class 49 and staff, no cadets guests are allowed. Guidance for attire for the cadets will be distributed during pass briefings.

Telephone Calls: After the Cadets have complete the ACCLIMATION PHASE of the program (the initial two weeks), they will be granted telephone privileges. *Cadets will be restricted to ONE 3-5-minute telephone call per week which will occur on weekends.* Long distance calls (out of the U.S.) will not be paid for by Commonwealth ChalleNGe. Cadets who wish to make long distance or toll phone calls will be required to have a telephone card. Cadets will not be allowed to use the telephone after 9:00 p.m unless previously approved by the Commandant or Program Coordinator.

Family Emergencies: In the event of a family emergency, parents/guardians or family members should contact a Commonwealth ChalleNGe Counselor, or if unavailable, a representative listed on page 5. *We request that you notify the ChalleNGe staff member of the nature of the emergency PRIOR TO notifying your cadet* as we would like to have a staff member present when a cadet is informed of sad or unexpected bad news.

Personal Items: Electrical appliances, electronic devices, MP3 players (only for Silver/Gold Phase), iPods, radios, CD/DVD players (only for Silver/Gold Phase), video games, cellular phones, playing cards, posters, knives, guns, expensive jewelry, food etc., are prohibited. Any unauthorized items that are found will be confiscated. Commonwealth ChalleNGe staff members are not responsible for any lost, stolen or broken items, even if the item had been confiscated. Please ensure your cadet does not try to bring these items with them on the first day of class as they will go through an amnesty check upon arrival and these items will be removed from their possession. In addition, cadets/parents/guardians will be held financially responsible for any lost items of clothing or equipment issued to them by Commonwealth ChalleNGe.

Cadet Grooming: Both male and female cadets are required to keep their hair neat and trimmed and must conform to the ChalleNGe grooming standards. Radical hair styles and color are prohibited. Males will be required to shave all facial hair. Uniform standards will be strictly adhered to.

Jewelry: Cadets may wear an inexpensive BLACK watch. No other jewelry is authorized.

Sneakers: Only ALL BLACK, low top with laces, inexpensive (no more than \$20.00 worth) are authorized wear. There should be no white or any other color on the sneaker. This is the STANDARD.

Automobiles: Cadets are not authorized to have a private vehicle while at Commonwealth ChalleNGe Youth Academy.

Tobacco/Nicotine: Commonwealth ChalleNGe Youth Academy has a no tobacco, no nicotine product use or possession policy for cadets, staff and visitors.

Religious Services: Non-denominational religious services will normally be held each week, normally on Sunday. Attendance at religious services is strictly voluntary.

Staff Assistance: All of the staff at Commonwealth ChalleNGe Youth Academy are standing by to assist with answering any questions you may have about the Academy. If you reach someone who cannot answer your particular question, you will be directed to a staff member who can answer your question. Do not hesitate to contact us.

SUPPORT ASSOCIATION

The Commonwealth ChalleNGe Support Association (CCSA) is very active in supporting the morale and welfare of the cadets. We encourage all parents/guardians and mentors to get involved with the association. The CCSA has been in existence since 2003. The current membership is in excess of 200 parents, mentors and friends of ChalleNGe. There is a Board of Directors consisting of the CCPA Officers, the Commonwealth ChalleNGe Program Director, Deputy Director and Mentor Coordinator who are ex-officio members of the board. The CCPA became a nonprofit corporation in the spring of 2005 and as of January 24, 2006 is a 501c3 organization. Some of the ways that the CCPA gets involved are as follows:

Fund Raising: The primary goal of fund raising is to fund scholarships. The CCSA conducts

fund raising activities for each ChalleNGe Class. Under the leadership of the Director of Fund Raising, car washes, raffles, home interior sales and fund solicitation efforts have provided the majority of funds raised. New ideas are always needed and welcomed.

Scholarship Program: The CCSA administers the scholarship program while the ChalleNGe staff selects the recipients. ChalleNGe graduates may apply to receive scholarship assistance if they are attending a college or trade/technical school. Information is available from all CCPA Officers and ChalleNGe staff or you can download the scholarship application on the ChalleNGe website.

How to get involved: If you would like to get involved in the Support Association, please notify one of CCSA members or contact the CCSA President, Mr. Clarence E. Perry at:

Clarence E. Perry
Pres. CCSA
1549 Harbor View Cove
Virginia Beach, VA 23464
757 374 2408 (Cell)

Visit CCSA on Facebook..... <https://www.facebook.com/VACCPA>

APPENDIX A: PASS REQUIREMENTS

Class 50 - 1st pass; Depart upon completion of pass brief on TUESDAY, 20 NOV 2018.

Return to ChalleNGe between 5-7pm, SUNDAY, 25 NOV 2018.

Ensure your cadet has dinner. Do not give them any NIGHT meds that are to be given before bed time if your cadet arrives before 7:00pm. The Team Leader will distribute the medication. If you arrive after at 8:00pm then give the cadet the night med and inform the Team Leader.

Class 50 - 1st pass Post Residential dates: 21, 22, 23 Nov

Placement Requirement Forms will be provided during the pass brief. Pass brief location will be announced on Facebook.

Class 50 – 2nd pass; Depart upon completion of pass brief on THU, 20 DEC 2018

Return to ChalleNGe between 5-7pm, TUE, 2 JAN 2019.

Class 50 - 2nd pass Post Residential dates: 21, 22, 23, 27, 30 Dec

GRADUATION: Saturday, 2 MARCH 2019 at 9:00am at either Ocean Lakes High School or the Virginia Beach Convention Center.

Six seats are assigned to each cadet which includes one for the mentor.

Send requests for extra seats to: mgarcia-roman@vachallenge.org and rguzman@vachallenge.org

FAMILY DAY – Saturday, 2 FEBRUARY 2019; 1230-1600 at Commonwealth ChalleNGe, SMR/Camp Pendleton

- *Bring beach chair and cash to contribute to the Support Association Fund raising efforts by purchasing food and tee-shirts among other things and to support the Cadet SCA fund.*
- *Bring as many people as you wish to see your cadet in during Family Day.*